Family men

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Family men

by magicalpen

Summary

Instead of winning the bet against Enzo, Damon loses. As such, he is the one that remains with Augustine. Decades later, Henrik Mikaelson is brought down there as the scientists try to use his powers to the 'greater good' and Damon ends up forming a bond with the child.
Now, years later, the original brothers are trying to use Stefan's girlfriend as a sacrifice and Damon gets trapped in the middle as he tries to keep his family and friends safe.
What he didn't expect is that once you get a Mikaelson's love, you get the attention of all the others too.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

> I'm making my brother watch the masterpiece that is TVD and he's like, obsessed, right?
> I guess I forgot how much I truly loved this show because now so am I. Again.
> So here's a little delijah, as a treat
> (btw I should say english isn't my first language, so if you see any mistakes that's why lol)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Damon, there has to be other way!”

“No, Stefan!” Damon twirled, baring his teeth at his brother while he shoved his clothes inside his suitcase. Henrik looked up from where he was sitting on Damon’s bed, a few feet away from them. “Don’t you see you’re being naïve? There’s no other way, and if you’re so intent on following your girlfriend’s wishes instead of doing the sane thing that’s on you. I’m out.”

He was fed up. Ever since his brother came back to their home town and met with Elena he’d been trapped in and out, having to leave everything behind – put Henrik’s life on hold – to save his brother or Elena’s little friends.

Damon was done, no. His best friend had just been possessed and now was basically being held hostage by a vampire with ten times his strength and instead of letting Bonnie do her witchy thing and murder him, Stefan as set on finding another non-existing way.

And the result of that was that Henri now had a cut on his forehead, curtesy from one of Klaus’ warlock friends.

If Stefan wanted to put himself in danger there was nothing Damon could do. His little brother was old enough to make his own decisions. Damon had a child to worry about.

“We miscalculated-”

He huffed a sarcastic laughter. “Yeah? And what are *we* going to *miscalculate* next? Is Elena going to attend another party? Maybe a ball? I’m not her bodyguard, I have a son to take care of.”

“Dad, it was just a little cut-” Henrik tried, but one icy glare from Damon had the twelve year old stopping on his tracks. Damon had almost suffered from a heart attack – if vampires could have them – when he saw Henrik crumbled on the living room’s floor, a massive cut above his eye. His entire face red with blood.

All because Elena wanted to go to that stupid high school dance.

He thought Henrik would be safe at home, knowing no vampires could ever come in.

He hadn’t thought Klaus had witches at his side.

He’d been wrong.

Truth is, it wasn’t anyone’s fault but Damon’s. He should have left Mystic Falls the moment his brother decided to put an original on their basement, or even later, when a warlock tried to take the stake keeping Elijah dead out. Hell, Damon should have packed his things and left the moment Katherine decided to stay with them – too close to Henri for it to be safe.

But Damon hated the thought of leaving Stefan alone to deal with such a dangerous situation.

But none of it mattered now; Henrik had gotten hurt. Damon wouldn’t let it happen again on his watch.

Turning to his son, he held the boy’s face, eyeing the reddish cut. Damon carefully put his Henrik’s fringe back, caressing the dark strands. “I want you to go to your room and put your clothes on your suitcase, alright? Then go to sleep, we’re leaving on the early morning.” He pressed a kiss on Henrik’s forehead.

It was definitely not alright with Henrik, the boy scowled and huffed, but he obeyed nonetheless. Damon closed his suitcase, picking a bag and leaving his room to go to the kitchen and pick some food for Henri to eat on the car, all the while trying to ignore Stefan’s footsteps behind him.

He knew Stefan thought if he only stared at him with his puppy eyes Damon would change his mind, but Damon was done now. He’d gone against every rational thought by staying for so long and having Stefan agree with Elena on going to that school night had shown him he’d been giving his all for someone who simply didn’t care.

It wasn't even that he hated Elena, or disliked her, really, but even if he liked the teenager it wasn't enough to make him ignore how egoistic her actions were sometimes.

Which is why – with a last lecture on common sense and self preservation – he closed the door on his brother's face and laid down on his bed to rest.

He woke up sweating from nightmares he didn't remember not long after, the bitter taste of terror playing around his mouth and leaving his tongue numb.

He took a long breath, trying to keep himself together by listening to the heartbeats around the house. There was Stefan's slow one, on the room beside his, and then there was Henrik's rapid one at the door in front of him.

Damon closed his eyes, smiling at bit at having the two people he loved the most in the world at the same place as his, and let himself sink against the soft mattress.

Then, just as he was about to relax, he startled, awakening completely so quickly it left him dizzy.

Henrik's heartbeat was not in front of his door, but rather somewhere else in the mansion.

Damon jumped away from the bed, not even putting his sandals as he vampire-ran outside of his room, running downstairs in a rush when a third heartbeat appeared at the house, weak and slower than the other two.

Please, no. Please, please, please, no.

A wave of pure sickness took over him as he found himself running downstairs towards the basement, going as fast as he could even as he felt like he'd faint at any moment.

The third heartbeat was getting stronger at every second.

"Henrik!" He shouted desperately, as if it would get the boy to put the dagger back, to move away, to run.

Damon opened the door to the cell Stefan had put Elijah in and opened his mouth in a silent scream as he saw Elijah sitting on the floor, panting while looking at Henri with large eyes.

He only had time to put himself between them and shove his son all the way back before Elijah was on him, the original's hand digging into his chest.

Chapter End Notes

Just a heads up: there isn't going to be any bashing in here, I love all characters from TVD (at least the main ones) but just as they are on canon, sometimes they're going to be *annoying*

Chapter 2: Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

> omg I thought this fic wouldn't have any readers. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE COMMENTS <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

McKinley, 2001

The first time Damon saw Henrik he'd been delirious with hunger and exhaustion.

His cell at Augustine had changed from a small room to a cubicle where he couldn't even move – forced to keep himself standing up or sitting with his knees close to his chest.

They were doing a new experiment with him. Damon couldn't remember the last time he fed or had any sleep - every time he wandered off to the sleeping realm a guard used a shock stick to wake him up.

His limbs were slow, and his breath came up short as his body tried its best to keep itself working. The hunger was so intense he didn't even feel it anymore, he just knew if he didn't get any blood soon he would die by the end of the day.

And yet the only thing Damon could concentrate on was the crying coming from somewhere close to him.

It just wouldn't stop. It kept going for days, incredibly high pitched and annoying and Damon just wanted to *sleep*.

How long could a human cry before they lost their voice? Damon wondered. *No, scratch that. What kind of psycho brings a child to a place like this*, he thought somberly.

"Just buy him a toy or something, for fuck's sake. Hey, kid! Shut the fuck up!" One of the guards shouted, hitting the cell's bars with his bat. The noise almost caused Damon's head to explode from how bad his headache got.

“The doc wants to see him.” Another one said, and Damon wondered if finally this new torture would stop and he would be released back to his old cell to rest, but the guard’s next words made his hopes die before they even grew. “Finally, I just couldn’t take the crying anymore.”

Damon snarled as someone shocked him again just as he slumped on himself, eyes closed.

And then the crying stopped.

Damon opened his eyes, frowning, and was surprised by having the child – a boy who couldn’t be older than four – staring at him wide eyed, his little hands reaching out for him.

Hazel eyes, big and innocent and loving. Hands reaching out for him.

“Big brother, please bring me with you!”

Stefan.

A rough voice brought him back to the present.

“Do you want to die, kid? Get any closer and you just might.” The guard holding the boy laughed, pushing him forwards down the hallway and ignoring Damon, but just as the kid got out of view, the crying started again.

They stopped on their tracks.

The boy was brought back into view. The crying stopped.

“What the fuck? James, do you see this shit?”

“Maybe the little monster can sense another one in here. Just take him to the doc, man."

The crying started again, but this time they didn't return.

It took a week for Damon to see the child again. He was back at his usual cell, and had been fed a bit more that week because apparently he had died for a few minutes and Augustine didn’t really want to lose his only vampire.

He didn’t seem to care about losing the child, though, because one day the boy was just pushed into his cell by a furious guard, the bars locked with the child inside.

Damon hadn't even been able to move or speak, too stunned. He could only watch as the boy toddled over to him, unaware of the danger he was put in.

Was it a test? Did they want to see if he would hurt the child?

Damon may be a vampire, but he wasn't a monster. He didn't kill children, that was just a big no for him.

Which did not mean he was about to snuggle the boy or give him any attention – he wasn't. Damon wanted the kid out, away from him. Damon couldn't help him. He couldn't even help himself.

The boy's mouth was dirty. Damon's nose scrunched up as he went to open the faucet on the corner of his his cell, absentmindedly wetting the hem of his shirt to clean over the child's mouth. He'd gotten all dirty with soup, if his sense of smell was to be trusted.

It seemed that no one there knew how to take care of a child. His father would have a seizure if he saw the state the boy's hair was at. The thought made Damon smile*, he would have liked to see that.*

"Daddy!" The child shouted suddenly, getting the guard to let out a mean laugh. The man was watching them with a sick sort of amusement shining in his eyes and Damon feel out of place for the first time in more than a century.

"I'm not- I'm not your daddy." He tried to explain, but instead caused the boy to start crying again.

"No, no, no. Don't cry. You can call me daddy, yes," Veins began to become clear on the child's neck because of his shouting and Damon did his best to avoid staring at it. To ignore the smell of it.

The boy pouted at him, big hazel eyes glistening with tears and Damon licked his lips awkwardly. It had been decades since he last had a conversation with someone, and even longer since he talked to a child.

"What's your name, bato?" He asked, using the same nickname he'd given Stefan without thinking. He cringed at that, trying to stop his train of thoughts from going there. *Was Stefan alright? Was he still alive after all this time?* Damon had long given up on counting the days he spent in that prison.

"'enrik." The boy smiled, large and big and too happy for a place like

this. Damon hadn't gotten to see the sun in a very long time, but he felt warm as if he was under it now.

He wasn't about to get attached, though. This child wouldn't last a week in a place like this and Damon wasn't idiotic enough to think he could do something about it.

But perhaps Damon could at least offer him a source of peace before it all ended.

"Alright, hum. Nice to meet you, Henrik." He whispered so the guard wouldn't listen.

"Wanna nap!" Henrik shouted, leaving Damon's side to climb his bed. Or try to climb it.

Damon actually let out a small chuckle at the scene, and he stopped himself from helping for a couple of seconds as he watched in amusement the toddler try to get into the bed and fail due to being too short.

"Daddy, up!" Henrik shouted, and Damon rushed to grab the child by his hips and put him into the middle of the bed before the guard behind them hurt the boy for the loud noise or something of the sort. He tried to put some distance between them, then, but Henrik held on to his wrist in a strangely strong grip and suddenly Damon found himself being pulled – or rather pushed – into bed by an unseen force.

Dumbfounded, he laid down rigidly – the toddler all but using him as a mattress and pillow altogether.

Mystic Falls, 2010

Damon grabbed a hold of the arm Elijah was stuffing inside his chest, trying his best to gain Henrik some time to run, but it was useless.

Elijah got right into his face, his nose almost brushing against Damon's as he snarled, enunciating every word slowly. "How dare you-"

Damon gasped as he felt fingers brush against his heart.

"Stop!" Henrik shouted, and Damon redoubled his efforts to get Elijah

to let him go.

What is he still doing here? Damon had taught him better than that.

He turned his face to shout at Henri to leave, but got cut right off when Elijah went flying away from him, his back hitting against the wall opposite do Damon's.

Damon put his hands against the gaping hole on his chest, feeling his heart still beating with disbelief, then Elijah began to get up and Damon turned to run towards the door to try and close it with Elijah inside, but found himself staring at Henrik, who instead or running away had entered the cell again.

His child had a worse death wish than Stefan and he combined.

Damon grabbed the dagger used to kill Elijah from the ground, putting himself between his son and the original. Elijah, surprisingly, didn't advance. He just stood there, staring at something behind Damon as if he was seeing a ghost.

With a sense of malaise, Damon looked back. Why was the original looking at his son like that?

It didn't matter. Damon took the chance to try and crave the dagger back into the man's chest, but found himself unable to move. He turned to Henrik in indignation, and tried to force himself to move, but at the sight of the blood beginning to drip from his boy's nose he stopped.

Fuck.

"Henrik, *let go*."

"Henrik." Elijah breathed, awe in his voice, and Damon turned to him, squaring his shoulders protectively.

"Don't talk to my kid!" He snarled.

Then, to his horror, Henrik walked up to him and grabbed his hand. Damon watched, unable to move, as the boy looked up at him. "It's alright, dad. He won't hurt me."

What was he talking about? Yes, he *will*.

"Dad?" Elijah parroted.

Damon frowned, following Henrik's motions as he let go and moved away from Damon, closer to Elijah.

"Henrik! Henrik, Henrik come back here!" He tried to move again, horrified, but stopped when the boy let out a pained gasp, staggering on his next step.

"Henrik." Elijah whispered again and Damon felt like he couldn't breathe when the man moved, holding his son's cheeks with both his hands. Damon was going to die, he wouldn't survive losing Henri, that was it for him. "You're alive- how?"

"Lijah." Henrik smiled, and to Damon's ever growing confusion, hugged the original, all but shoving his face into the man's chest. "It's really you."

"Yes, it's me, little brother. I'm here now."

Chapter End Notes

Fun fact: Damon used to call Stefan "bato" because Stefan was a very angry baby and kept saying he was arrabiato (bato), which is angry in italian, all the time lmao
Now, for explanations: So, basically Damon was taken in 1953 and stayed with the Augustine until 2002, when he finally escaped along with Henrik. So, he's been out and about for eight years. This has *multiple* consequences
Also, the Salvatore's house deed is in Henrik's name, so he invited Elijah in and that's why he's fine being inside the house
At last, but not less importantly: Klaus didn't see Henrik as Ric because Damon keeps him away from the 'adult conversations'

Chapter 3: Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

> So, a quick retelling of events since I want to make this a short story:
> Mason found out about Stefan and Katherine, got jealous and attacked him. Damon was still the one to kill him.
> Damon killed Elijah when he kidnapped Elena, but he wasn't at the murder dinner party to kill him a second time since John has no personal vendetta against him here (he's not in love with Elena, after all), so that we just Ric and John. The dinner also didn't happen at the Salvatore's house because Damon would never put Henrik in danger like that, but at the Gilbert's. At last, he also wasn't there when Elena killed Elijah.
> Elijah still saved Damon from the vampires that wanted to bring Elena to Klaus when they went to Slater's appartment.
> Rose still died.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

At first Elijah thought he was hallucinating, torn between the past and the present. Then, when Henrik didn't disappear he concluded the Salvatores had somehow found out about his relation to Niklaus and dug into his past deep enough to find out about the brother he'd lost.

Then, Elijah believed they were about to use his memories of Henrik, his sweet baby sibling, against him and every thought left his mind as he was consumed by rage.

But no, it wasn't that either. If the astonished expressions on the Salvatore brothers faces were anything to go by, they were as confused as Elijah.

Henrik was the only one who didn't seem to be in a daze, talking their ears off.

After explaining he'd been dreaming about his past life ever since he turned twelve three weeks ago, Henrik told them he only realized who the corpse at the basement was that very night, when the faces of the people in his dreams finally became clear and the witches coaxed him into sneaking down there.

He felt like an intruder while he watched his brother move his hands

around animatedly, occasionally bumping his elbows into the other two vampires that sat at each side of him, watching Elijah like hawks as if he would ever be a danger to his own family.

He blamed the days he spent dead on his disorientation, but Elijah simply couldn't comprehend how this entire situation came into play.

It was Henrik, the baby brother he lost more than a millennia ago, who was sitting in front of him and calling Damon Salvatore, of all people, *dad*.

The elder Salvatore had always been a wildcard for him. Differently from his brother, Elijah knew almost nothing about Damon apart from the fact he was turned in 1864 along with his younger brother. The younger man must have laid low during his entire life as a vampire, something almost unheard of when it came to younger vampires.

When he first came face to face with the younger and got almost effortlessly killed by him – Elijah *had* been caught by surprise at seeing another doppelganger after half a century , after all – he, of course, dug into the man's past.

Any sightings of him vanished after 1953, and it remained that way until a couple of weeks ago. Just as his history indicated, Damon only made his presence known whenever the youngest Salvatore, Ms. Gilbert or one of his friends were in danger, helping to solve the situation swiftly before disappearing right after.

No matter what he did Elijah couldn't keep track of him.

And now the younger had changed from an annoying stone on his path to the most fascinating being Elijah had come across within hundreds of years.

Because the Henrik in front of him wasn't the ten years old boy Elijah once knew. This Henrik was open, confident, extroverted.

Nothing like the shy and quiet child he once knew.

"And dad was like," Henrik lowered his voice, pressing his eyes into slits in an imitation of Damon – and hearing his brother call Damon Salvatore dad still made Elijah gasp internally. "'*Did I ask*?' And *pow*! Dude went flying in front of my window!" His brother continued on one of his tales.

He could have lost this. He *did* lose the first twelve years of his baby

brother's life, Elijah thought, a bittersweet feeling dancing around his chest because Henrik was so obviously happy.

Back when they were humans none of them had much time for their much younger sibling, always busy trying to survive or hoard provisions for the winter. Henrik was much younger than most of them, his shortest age-gap between being between Rebekah and he and it amounted to eight years. He was just coming to the end of his childhood when the worst happened.

In his years alive Elijah read countless books, and during the contemporary age many of them were about psychology. The reason Henrik was so closed off back then was due to a lack of attention, something that clearly hadn't happened this time around.

"Can we address the elephant in the room?" Stefan interrupted.

"You mean the original vampire?" Damon asked sarcastically, not taking his eyes away from Elijah.

He watched as Henrik leaned towards Damon's side, and the younger vampire rigidly wrapped his arm around the boy's shoulders. His brother stared at him, begging with his eyes for Elijah to intervene as he used to do when their siblings fought or had a disagreement. It made his heart *ache*.

To distract himself from thinking of his lost siblings, Elijah decided it was time for him to clear up any misconceptions. His brother clearly cared deeply for the Salvatores and that meant so did Elijah. "In light of the recent events I believe our alliance has changed into something deeper-"

"It hasn't." Damon interrupted him fearlessly. Stefan turned to him, his eyes pleading with his older brother to keep quiet, but Damon paid him no mind, staring at Elijah. Elijah met his eyes in a glare, eyebrows furrowed slightly in annoyance.

He continued, trying again. "-and as such I assure you of my eternal gratitude and overall protection."

At that both brothers frowned. Henrik perked up, smiling at him, and Elijah smiled back. Unable to help himself, he went to pick his brother's hand and assure himself of Henrik's realness, but Damon startled at the sudden movement, an arm reaching out to stop him from touching Henrik.

“Dad, it’s cool!”

Damon huffed. “We killed you.” He told Elijah, matter of fact. Stefan looked like he wanted to rear choke his brother away from the table. “*Thrice*.”

“I realize that, yes.” Elijah leaned back on his chair, legs crossed.

Damon snorted. “And you want us to believe you don’t care.”

“We shall pretend it didn’t happen.”

“*Bullshit*.”

“Ha! You cursed!”

“H, please.” Stefan massaged his own temples. “Why don’t you go watch something on the living room while the adults talk?”

“He’s not leaving my sight.” Damon denied, and Elijah was inclined to agree.

“Damon, you need to relax.”

“*You* relax, Stefan, I’m just peachy here.”

“C’mon, Damon. He’ll be just outside the kitchen! He shouldn’t be seeing this.”

“I’m old enough to stay, though!” Henrik scowled, looking betrayed. “And I want to talk to Lijah!”

“Shut up.” Damon pointed a finger at Stefan, his voice acquiring an accent he normally didn’t have and he seemingly forgot Elijah was there as he berated his brother. “This is all your fault! I warned you it was idiotic to bring him into our home and you refused to listen!”

“Dad always goes back to talking like an old man when he’s mad.” Henrik whispered to him from between the brothers. The words got the attention from both of them, and Henrik gave them a mischievous smile. “*Anyways*,” He sangsong. “Where’s Nik? And Bekah? Kol? Are they like you? Original vampires?”

Oh.

Elijah didn’t think he would ever feel such grief as he had felt the day he found out Niklaus had thrown his siblings’ bodies at the sea, but

the feeling was so immense it made him want to crumble right there.

Henrik still smiled at him, one of his canines missing. Elijah swallowed, trying to find internal strength to give his baby brother the news.

In the end he couldn't.

“Rebekah and Kol are gone, Henrik.” Damon’s eyes flashed with something, the emotion gone so fast Elijah wasn’t able to categorize it.

Henrik frowned. “They didn’t turn? What about Nik? And Finn?”

How was Elijah supposed to tell Henrik that yes, Rebekah and Kol *had* turned, but were gone forever because of Niklaus, the brother Henrik had always been the closest to. And Finn… none of them *liked* Finn, but they all loved Finn.

It was simple; he couldn’t. He couldn’t do it to Henrik, the burden was too heavy for a child to shoulder.

“Finn is gone to… and Niklaus and I had a fight. I haven’t seen him in years,” Henrik opened his mouth to ask why, but Elijah stopped him with a look. “And I do not wish to speak of him or with him.”

“Yeah, okay.” Damon got up. “You, keep an eye on him.” He pointed towards Stefan and then Henrik. “And you, you come with me.”

Elijah looked at the finger pointing at his direction, debating with himself if he wanted to be ordered around like that.

Well, he supposed one time wouldn’t hurt. The youngest was deeply distrustful of him and if Elijah wanted to have a better relationship with him he supposed he would have to give in a little bit.

“Ouch, uncle Stefan. We’ve been benched.” He heard his brother mutter out just before he disappeared out of the kitchen.

He made sure to keep listening in to Stefan and Henrik, afraid his brother would disappear on him, but kept most of his attention on Damon.

The Salvatore stopped just as they reached the living room.

“Niklaus is *the* Klaus isn’t he?” He hissed.

That was not how he preferred to tell either Salvatore. He nodded.

“Your crazy brother is the one trying to kill my brother’s girlfriend. Funny how you ‘forgot’” He made quotation marks with his fingers. “To tell us that little fact.”

Elijah put both his hands on his pockets. “It would have only made you distrust me.”

“Yeah, and guess what? I was right to! I could smell the scent of a liar from miles away!” Damon spread his arms. Then he crossed his arms, getting close enough to his face for Elijah to see that his eyes had slices of green in them. “We gave you our trust and you lied to us once, why should we trust you again?”

Elijah huffed. “You’ve never trusted me, Damon.”

The younger vampire studied him. Elijah let him stare as much as he wanted. Damon was important to Henrik, which meant he was important to Elijah too and he needed the younger to start trusting him.

Damon’s lips turned down and he took a few steps back before admitting. “No, I haven’t.”

They were silent for a couple of moments.

“But Henrik loves you.” He whispered, as if afraid that speaking the words out would make them more true and he looked down when Elijah tried to meet his eyes. “He became quiet since the nightmares began, no matter what I did he always seemed sad, but on into the night he didn’t shut up once and he’s been laughing.”

Who was this creature who spoke of his brother so lovingly? How did Elijah manage to miss the person underneath the mask?

“I’m his family.” He stated simply. That was all there was to it, he didn’t need to say anything more. Henrik was his family, Elijah would do anything for him. He was his only family left – Niklaus was too far gone to reach. “You’re his family too.”

“I am.” Damon agreed. Then, “Klaus killed your other siblings.” It wasn’t a question, but Elijah nodded nonetheless. Their eyes met again. “That's why you hate him.”

“I do.”

“Will Henrik be in danger if Klaus ever finds out he’s alive?”

And there it was; the question Elijah was doing his best to avoid ever since he came back from the dead.

Would Henrik be in danger if Niklaus ever found out about his resurrection? Elijah wanted nothing more than to deny it, but he had long let go of assuming he knew how Niklaus' mind worked.

There was a part of him that would always wish for the younger brother he once knew, but after so many deceptions that part was now so small he didn't have the strength to expect anything more than worse from Niklaus.

For better or for worse, it was best to get rid of Niklaus before he ever came to know.

"I make no pretense to know how my brother would react."

Damon nodded, serving Elijah a glass of scotch. He accepted it, noticing Damon didn't have any and subtly smelt the drink to make sure there wasn't any vervain in it. There wasn't. "I would prefer not to risk it. Would you?"

It was obvious where the conversation was going.

"Is this your way of asking me if I intend to tell Niklaus?"

"He's your brother, would it be too far off for me to think you may still want to try and reconnect with him?"

Elijah approached Damon, tilting his head down so they could still face each other. The younger vampire swallowed dry at the proximity, a drop of sweat sliding down his throat where his Adam's apple bobbing nervously even as lifted his chin and stared at Elijah dead on. Inside, the dormant monster in him stirred at the display of bravery and he once again admired the force of nature that the elder Salvatore was.

But Damon shouldn't feel the need to put his armor up for him. Elijah wasn't the enemy, would never be one to him.

"I've long stopped on my quest to search for my brother's redemption, and I would never put Henrik's life at risk for the sake of one last attempt."

Damon gazed into his eyes again, and Elijah let him search for the truth of his word without shutting off. The eyes are the window of the

soul, and he had always been careful not to corrupt what was left of his.

“I still don’t trust you.”

“You don’t have to, but my family is everything to me, and you’ve taken care and provided for mine for years.” Elijah began to round him slowly, the younger following him with his eyes. “My brother calls you his father.” He leaned forwards, his face getting close enough to the other’s nape for him to smell the leather and wood in his scent and his lips curled at the way Damon took an instinctive step back, cheeks reddening slightly. “That rather makes us family, too, don’t you agree?”

Chapter End Notes

The maaaaaaan of the hour shoots his shot
This Damon will be slightly different from canon because a) he never turned his emotions off, b) he’s been under torture for half a century c) he’s a dad, guys, and a really good one at that and d) his priority is to keep his family safe, not Elena, so he doesn't hate Elijah in here, he just doesn't trust him cause they killed him too many times for Damon to think he doesn't want revenge.
It's way too funny for me to write them being worried about Klaus when we all know our favorite hybrid will be over the moon to find out his baby sibling is alive
(yes, the last scene was inspired by Hannibal, sue me)
Also, I hope you guys like the personality I gave Henrik. I wanted him to be a bit more extroverted like Damon, since he was raised by him, but softer and more open. We barely see Henrik from the flashbacks in the show, but he seemed like a serious child.
Next chapter coming out Sunday!

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

> Once again, thank you all for the comments <3333
> Just a heads up, and this is IMPORTANT. PLEASE READ THIS NOTE.
> I messed up in the last chapter because when I wrote it I wrote two versions of it, one in which Henrik knew who Klaus was, and one where he didn't.
> It took me some time to figure out which one was best, but then I was like, I don't even have kids, y'know, but I wouldn't let my twelve year old cousin know about dangerous stuff if I could help it, so Damon obviously would make sure his kid wouldn't know about it, so I chose the version where Henrik doesn't know.
> And posted the one where he does lmao
> I already fixed it, so if you want to check it it's just during the moment Damon says it's Stefan's fault that they're in that whole situation, and Henrik's like, 'is Klaus our brother Niklaus?'
> He never makes that connection.
> So, yeah, sorry about that and basically Henrik does know there's someone wrecking havoc in their lives, but he doesn't know Klaus' name, doesn't know exactly what he's doing or planning to do. He just has a vague understanding that the mystery man is dangerous and that they're trying to stop him from doing something bad to Elena.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I thought you were leaving yesterday.”

Of course.

Of course the moment he left the packed living room to grab a bit of blood Elena took the chance to follow and corner him. He sighed, deeply and loudly and quite obvious, to let her know he *did not* want to talk to her at the moment. Or later, for that matter.

Damon ripped the top off the blood bag and started drinking from it, quickly, so he could return to the safety of being around other people and avoid this conversation.

“I just wanted to say thank you. For staying.”

He scoffed at that, putting the bag down on the counter. “I didn’t stay for you.”

She had the gall to look upset. “Damon, I’m sorry. I’ve already apologized, you didn’t tell me anything about your plan, I don’t know what else I was supposed to-”

“You slapped me in the face! For saving your life!” He sent her a dirty look, his nostrils flaring at his anger. “So forgive me if your sorry excuse of an apology wasn’t accepted.”

Damon was pretty easy going when it came to insults or being hurt, but being slapped in the face was something he promised himself would be left in the past, back when he was weak and forced to endure his father’s abuse and mistreatments. He couldn’t even get back at her for it because she was a human girl and his brother’s girlfriend and she was about to die in a sacrifice before the day ended. Her life sucked enough on its own for Damon to add any more pain to it.

It didn’t mean he felt any less bitter towards her.

Tears began to grow in her eyes and she blinked rapidly to get rid of them. He sighed, feeling sorry for her despite himself. “Go stay with your friends and family, Elena. This may be your last day alive, don’t waste it with me.”

“Damon-”

“You wouldn’t happen to have another one of those, would you?” He turned to see Elijah entering the kitchen, pointing at the blood bag left in the counter, a small puddle forming as it dripped on the marble.

Jeez, just what he needed. First Elena, and now Sir No Personal Space. He didn’t know *why*, Damon had taken a bath before going to sleep that night so he knew he wasn’t giving off any bad odor, but he *knew* Elijah had smelled him two days ago.

Damon also knew *Elijah* knew where to find the blood bags because he’d been staying with them for two days already and had fed many times during his stay, which meant he was trying to help him with Elena by interrupting the uncomfortable conversation.

Why, again, was what Damon was wondering, even if he was thankful. Damon had already told him the night before he didn’t have to be nicer to him or anything just for the sake of some misplaced gratitude.

It wasn't like Damon raised Henrik for him.

"Hum, yeah, there's a couple in the minibar over there." He pointed, and pointedly did not dwell on the fact that he could have let Elijah go downstairs and grab a bag from the basement.

Elena looked over at him, hesitating on her spot, but when Damon made no mention of acknowledging her any further she finally left the kitchen, leaving him alone with an unknown variable on his hands.

He stared from the corner of his eyes as Elijah picked one of the bags and a glass and forced himself not to tense up as the original stopped by his side, way closer than needed considering how large the counter was, his intense dark eyes not leaving Damon as he filled the glass with blood.

Again, what was wrong with that original vampire? Where he once pretty much ignored Damon he was now going out of his way to stay close to him and it was bothering the shit out of him.

Because Elijah moved and acted like he knew he was the highest predator in the room, a level of surety that no other vampire Damon met had. The original was clearly dangerous, and Damon always felt attracted to dangerous things, and that was exactly the problem because Damon didn't do attraction, or love, or relationships anymore.

During his life as a human, finding love was all he ever wanted. Apart from Stefan, who'd been more like his son than a brother for most of his human life since Damon had to take care of him after their mother died, Damon never had love at home. So he dreamed of finding a young lady he loved, and who loved him in return. Maybe she would have a loving family that would accept him with open arms and together they would make a loving family of their own.

Then Katherine came and he'd been so sure she was the one. She was lonely too, a young lady in search of a family. They could become each other's family.

That dream of his didn't last long and when he found out how deep her feelings for Stefan ran, Damon hated his brother. It took Enzo, for all his faults, to make Damon understand Stefan had been a victim too.

A couple of weeks after he escaped Augustine – and he would never, ever admit it – Damon started dreaming of finding someone again. He'd been terrified and lost, back then, trying his best to provide for

himself and a toddler in a world completely different from the one he once knew and in his weakness he wished he had someone to depend on for once.

He wasn't in that headspace space anymore. Life wasn't a fairy tale and Damon hadn't been a child for a long time.

Elijah leaned against the counter and even that movement had an elegance to it.

"I wasn't aware your relationship with Ms. Gilbert had soured that badly in such a short span of time."

Damon frowned at him, taking his bag out of his lips. "What are you talking about?"

"You seemed to like her quite a lot."

A laugh burst out of him so suddenly at the suggestive tone he started coughing, the blood obstructing his airways. "Sorry, wrong pipe." He hit his own chest, an incredulous smile still dancing on his lips. "You thought I liked Elena? Like, that I was in love with her?"

The original frowned, looking so genuinely confused it made Damon want to laugh again. "Weren't you?"

Damon scoffed. "No? She's my brother's girlfriend. Been there, done that. Not going there again."

"And yet you endangered yourself for her."

"Not for her," Damon denied, even though he did help Elena a couple of times simply because he liked her as a person, but he never put himself in danger for her, not really. "For Stefan."

He pushed himself off the countertop, throwing his empty bag on the trash, and slowly made his way out of the kitchen when his wrist was grabbed. He turned around, his guard up for an attack when he was met with Elijah's earnest face.

And wasn't that just another thing that made Damon so uncomfortable? There was something so honest, so earnest about the man ever since he found out about Henrik that Damon couldn't help but believe the original would never let any harm happen to Henrik, which allowed him to stay and help Stefan out with the whole Klaus situation.

“What is it?”

Elijah let go of him, then, rolling his wrist as if to straighten up his watch. “I apologize for grabbing you so suddenly.”

“It’s fine.” Damon frowned. He wasn’t scared or anything.

“I realized I never thanked you properly for caring for Henrik when I wasn’t there for him.”

The conversation had taken such a different turn it almost gave him an emotional whiplash.

Elijah’s eyes were pits of darkness as he stared at them, Damon was drawn in. “Thank you, Damon.”

Despite himself, he flushed at the emotional gratitude.

Clearing his throat, he took a step back. “Uhm, you’re welcome, I guess.” Then he left for the living room, walking as fast as he could without making it seem like he was running from the conversation, heart stuttering on his chest.

The others were already pacing when he arrived, and Damon knew right away that they hadn’t been able to find Caroline.

After Elijah had told him the truth about the curse of the sun and the moon – and what a brilliant lie that was – Damon had spent the night worrying about who the hybrid was going to pick as a sacrifice for the vampire part of it.

According to Ric, who was finally back on his body and for some reason that Damon didn’t care about, – but was rather happy with - safe and sound, Klaus had Katherine.

At first he thought she would be the sacrifice. It would be vicious, and rather symbolic for it to be her since she escaped the last time, but when Bonnie told them Caroline was supposed to have a video call with her last night and she didn’t show up, he’d grown worried.

Especially when Elijah assured him Klaus would make Katherine suffer much more before killing her.

“I’ll call Liz.” He told Stefan when his brother stopped by his side, looking worried.

He was finally getting the hang of the phones when the things

changed from keyboard to touchscreen. He stared at it, worrying on his lips as he put his password.

Menu, contacts, then slide down until he finds Liz' name.

She picked up on the third ring.

Feeling everyone's eyes in him, he turned around and faced the fireplace so he could concentrate. "Liz! Is Caroline with you?"

"It's rather early, Damon. Did something happen?"

"Hum, sorry." He looked sideways, at the old clock standing on the corner of the living room. Liz was right, it was only 7:40 am. On a Sunday. "Did I wake you up?"

"No, no. I'm running some errands."

"Oh, right." He nodded to himself. "It's just that Elena and Caroline were supposed to hang out this morning, but forgot to set up a place – you know how teenagers are." He joked, hearing Liz laugh and agree on the other side of the call. "And now she can't reach Caroline. Is she at home?"

"I haven't seen Caroline since yesterday's morning. Tell Elena to try at Matt's, maybe Bonnie's?"

Shit.

"Yeah, yeah, will do. Bye, Liz!" He waited for her to answer, and hung up. The room was taken by a heavy tension. "She hasn't been home since yesterday morning. Have you tried her boyfriend?"

"He says he hasn't seen her since yesterday either." Elena answered.

"I could make a tracking spell." Henrik offered, and Damon turned to see him on the bottom of the stairs, an empty glass of water in his hands.

The boy had been coming downstairs and returning to his room all morning with the excuse of having to drink water, as if Damon didn't know he was actually using the chance to spy on them instead of finishing the math homework Damon had assigned him.

"What a brilliant idea!" He exclaimed with a smile, widening his eyes theatrically and watched as Henri's face lightened up. Then he pulled the rug out from under him. "It's a no – go grab a bottle of water and

go back upstairs."

Henrik scowled. "I can help, though."

"You can help by finishing your homework." Damon answered, watching Elijah arrive at the living room with the corner of his eyes. He wondered if the man would say something, but the original seemed content with just watching.

"I can't reach Bonnie or Jeremy either." Elena chimed in, starting to sound nervous.

Damon sighed. He really wanted to keep Henrik away from all of this, but it was Caroline. In all her neurotic, bossy glory the girl somehow managed to make Damon care. Then there was Henrik and his massive crush on the blond vampire, and Liz, who would be devastated if something happened to her daughter.

"Dad, it's Care, you have to let me help." As if *everyone* didn't already know why he wanted to help.

Each person present in that damn living room seemed to be asking him silently to allow it.

Elijah sat down onto an empty sofa, crossing his legs and looking like he was a model for those fashion magazines. "It is highly unlikely letting him help once will cause us any problems."

Oh, c'mon!

He gave in. "What do you need?"

Henrik smiled. "Just something of hers."

Throughout the years Damon managed to gather quite a good number of grimoires that he found in places that he knew once lived witches. It was surprisingly big the number of warlocks and witches that died without leaving descendants, their lives' work left hidden between blocks on walls or underneath wooden floors. Many witches Damon once knew during his years in the past century died that way.

Henrik was completely self taught, a genius of his own making.

Damon knew next to nothing about magic, but it was clear the boy had a large amount of it. So he gave Henrik everything he could and helped him as much as possible.

The result was that Henrik practiced so much a spell that caused Bonnie *Bennet* nosebleeds was nothing for him, though Damon knew the girl would once become a very powerful witch.

After a few minutes of preparation, in which Elena gave Henrik a pair of earrings Caroline had lent her and Damon prepared a few snacks for Henrik, they were ready.

Henrik's eyes moved behind his closed eyelids, palms held upwards as he sat cross-legged on the sofa. He was mumbling a spell in French, having learned the language during a summer they spent traveling around the country.

One minute later, Henrik opened his eyes.

"I've found her." Damon extended the cup filled with hot chocolate he was holding and his son took it from his hands, taking a deep gulp. "Looks like some psycho's lair. There's a bunch of chains on the walls and iron bars. She's with the werewolf, Tyler. I think they're gonna date."

Damon chuckled, ruffling his son's hair. *Yeah,* so *not the point.* "They're at the Lockwood's old dungeon thing. I'm gonna get her home."

"I'll go with you." Stefan stood up, walking up to him.

"Yeah, weak as you are, you'd only slow me down." Damon patted his brother's shoulder. He didn't want Stefan outside the house where he could be taken as the replacement vampire. Damon could protect himself, but his brother's diet made him too weak to even run for as long as a normal vampire could.

"It's the full moon tonight." Elijah warned him, frowning for some reason. The original also got up. "Perhaps I should go with you."

"I'd rather you stay with Henrik." He and Stefan. Damon found himself somehow trusting in the original when it came to keeping Henrik safe, but who knows if Elijah didn't want to take the child away with him somewhere. "And Klaus can't know you're alive, remember?"

It had to be him, Ric didn't even have his ring anymore, Jenna was useless at the moment and any interference coming from Elena would possibly cause everyone she knew to die.

“Be quick.” Henrik told him, hugging him. Damon wrapped his arms around him tightly enough for the boy to let out a small ‘whoof’ and let him go. Stefan watched him with a pinched expression on his face, the worrywart.

“Damon, be careful.” Ric told him.

He flashed them all a grin, and of all the stares Elijah’s was the one he felt the most. “I’ll be right back.”

When Damon returned, Elena had already been taken by Klaus and an almost suffocating tension had installed itself all over the room. Caroline was safe at home, and her domestic wolf she made sure Damon took with them on their escape and almost transformed in front of them too.

Stefan was extremely upset even with the text call he received from Jeremy telling him John Gilbert would be exchanging his life force with Elena’s to save her life, but thankfully had the sense to stay inside.

The hybrid had tried to capture Jenna by making Katherine call her and pretend to be Elena, but since the girl was sitting across the room from her at that moment, Elena’s aunt stayed put.

“You think he wanted to use her as the vampire sacrifice?” Ric whispered after updating Damon on everything when the vampire went to drink another blood bag. He was strangely hungry even though he usually only fed in the mornings.

Damon scoffed. “Well, yeah, obviously, that psycho!”

He drained the blood quickly before returning to where the others were. Elijah was just waiting for the right moment to leave and Damon would have to distract Henri so the kid wouldn’t realize they were planning to kill his older brother.

Henrik still didn’t know the hybrid causing havoc in their lives was the man he so lovingly nicknamed Nik. He felt horrible, keeping such information away from the boy, but Damon was the parent. He was the one who was supposed to make the difficult decisions while Henrik only worried about the pains of growing up.

A wave of dizziness took over him for a moment, and he supported himself on the doorframe. Ric was beside him in an instant. “Are you alright, man?”

“Yeah. Must be the stress or something.” He frowned. Had he really strained himself so much only by running back and forth? Klaus’ warlock hadn’t even done much to him.

“Damon, it’s time.” Stefan approached.

He nodded, straightening up and ignoring the look his friend was sending him. “Hal? How about lasagna for dinner?” He called out.

“Cool!”

“Come help Stefan, please!”

His brother furrowed his eyebrows. “What?”

Damon passed by him. “I’m going with Elijah and Bonnie.”

“What?” Both Ric and Stefan asked, following him and the last went as far as blocking his way.

“Why are you leaving?”

“One,” He showed one finger. “Safety in numbers. Two,” Another finger. “Well, baby brother, someone has to make sure the deal is done, you know.”

“I’ll go with you.”

“I need you to watch Henrik, and you and I both know you’d do some stupid shit if you saw Elena.” He rounded Stefan just as Henrik came running. “Keep my kid out of danger, and don’t tell on me. I’ll bring your girlfriend back, hybrid dead and all, in no time.” He rushed out in a whisper.

But Henrik had always been too smart for his own age. “Are you going out?”

“Yeah.”

“Why?”

“None of your business.” He sang song with a smile he knew to be annoying, giving his son a quick side hug. “Don’t let Stefan burn the lasagna, I’ll be right back.”

“Stop saying that, it’s such a dying horror movie character thing to say.”

Ric laughed at that, although Damon didn't understand what was so funny.

He let the two children and his brother behind, finding Jenna slumbering in one of the couches, tear tracks in her cheeks. Elijah was waiting for him on the front door, having heard him say he was coming.

"Thanks for waiting." Damon told him.

The original smiled. "Of course."

And they began running towards the place where the sacrifice had happened.

I'm sorry, those dark eyes seemed to say as Elijah glanced at him, and before Damon could do anything, they were gone, both brothers disappearing behind a wall of fire.

Damon knew there was a large possibility Elijah wouldn't keep his word, but he still felt the betrayal dig deep. Deeper down, Damon understood why Elijah had done it. He would've done the same for Stefan, no matter what.

Klaus said he hadn't thrown his siblings on the ocean. *But what if Klaus was lying?*

Bonnie screamed next to him, looking worse for wear, and Damon supported her against him as she slumped, her tears mixing up with the blood that fell from her nose.

"It'll be alright," He comforted her. *If Klaus hadn't killed his siblings, was he even a danger to Henrik?*

"No, I should've killed them!" She cried between harsh breaths.

"It wasn't your responsibility, Bonnie." He heard himself saying the words, but his mind was filled with worries on whether or not Elijah would speak of Henrik. "They've been around for a millennia and no witch ever managed to get rid of them."

She was only seventeen. At least she tried.

Numbly, he could see Elena crumbled on the floor next to two women; one he recognized as the werewolf that killed Rose, good riddance, and the other he'd never seen before, her long dirty blond hair covering her face.

Somewhere not far enough away, a deep howl echoed.

"C'mon, we have to get Elena. Let's leave this place." He extended a hand to help her up. The girl nodded, but in her sluggish movements, instead of grabbing his hand she grabbed his forearm.

"Damon, what is this?" She passed her thumb over his covered skin.

"What is what?"

Taking his arm away from her, he passed his own thumb over the same place, feeling the skin uneven and the fabric over it slightly sticky.

He pulled the dark shirt back, revealing his naked forearm.

Damon froze, Bonnie's gasp somewhere on the back of his head.

Between the pale, even skin, a purple bite stood.

Chapter End Notes

Please read the note at the beginning if you haven't *****
Back to the actual ending notes...
I was actually mad af at Elena for slapping Damon that episode cause girlll, wtf is wrong you he just saved your life? I know she didn't know Bonnie was alive, but slapping someone in the face is such a no go? (unless we're talking about how she slapped Damon when he tried to compel her to kiss him on the first eps, because that one was well deserved)
Who did Klaus kill in Jenna's place, you may ask? Vicki Donovan, cause she's insufferable and I can't stand her and I wanted her gone
Anyways, now that the curse is broken we can finally move on with the plot (the plot: found family and romance)
Damon is so deep in denial and obliviousness that the idea Elijah is interested in him doesn't even cross his head
Anyways, next one coming on Sunday, hope you liked this chapter!

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

> Hello!! Here I am, as promised.
> Hope you enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Awareness returned to him slowly, as it usually did when he got killed by a dagger with white oak ashes, and although his memories were still mixed up by his many centuries of living, Elijah still knew one thing; as usual, Niklaus was at fault.

He blinked, vision focusing and blurring as he licked his lips, seeing the floor next to his face and the wall towering over him in a way it usually didn't. He was laying on the floor, he realized, in a *Merrion* suit.

"… regret… need... don't…"

It all came to focus in a sudden, disorientating way. The dagger that was no doubt used to kill him lying at his side. Katerina, crouched down on the ground, Stefan's unconscious body half supported by her as his head rested against her chest.

Had she un-daggered him? He wondered, baffled.

Katerina nodded her head towards something behind him and Elijah sat up, pushing his fringe away from his forehead and back to its place. He picked up the dagger, prepared to stick it to Niklaus' chest the moment he saw him. He would spend years ripping his brother's heart out until the rage he was feeling left him.

Betrayed again, but for the last time. Elijah would make sure Niklaus would learn the consequences of crossing him for the last time.

When he rose to make good on his promise to himself, he staggered back at the scene in front of him. It lasted a second, and then he was throwing himself against his brother, punching him in the jaw and sticking the dagger on his stomach.

Henrik screamed as he pushed Niklaus away from him, holding him against the nearest wall by his neck.

His brother snarled, face turning as his eyes became yellow and Elijah growled at him, feeling his face turn as well. When Niklaus tried to overthrow him, he took the dagger out and stabbed it on his left shoulder, using the momentum to break his brother's right hand at the same time.

Niklaus groaned, slumping slightly.

"No! Elijah, stop!"

"Go back to your dad, Henrik!" He ordered, having half a mind to avoid mentioning Damon by his name. "You, what am I to do with you? You betrayed me for the last time, brother."

Niklaus head-butted him, forcing him to stumble a few steps backwards. His brother was on him the next second, kicking him back again and taking the dagger Elijah had sticked on him out. "Since when have you known he was alive? You kept him from me!" Niklaus roared, tears beginning to fall.

Elijah failed to care for his crocodile tears.

He grabbed a hold of Niklaus' leg when the younger made to kick him again, forcing his knee down until it popped. As his brother fell down, Elijah broke the nearest chair until he had another piece of wood to stab him again. Elijah crawled over him, pulling him by the collar. "Yes. And I assure you, Niklaus, this is the last you see of him."

He was about to stake his brother in the heart when his body stopped moving.

Instinctively, he tried to face Henrik, to warn him their brother did not deserve to be saved, but he couldn't even move his neck.

"Stop!" Henrik shouted, and when he came to view his face was covered in snot and tears. "Just stop fighting!" He garbled out.

"Henrik." Niklaus breathed out in bewilderment.

"Why are you fighting?" Henrik pressed the palms of his hands against his eyes, an ugly sob leaving his throat. "I don't have time for this! My dad is dying!" He kneeled by their side, grabbing a hold of Niklaus' good arm. "You said you had the cure!"

Elijah froze, stomach churning - what happened to Damon Salvatore during the day and a half Elijah had spent away? He made sure to stay

with Niklaus' at all times so nothing would happen to him or Henrik - and he watched in confusion as his feelings were reflected on Niklaus' face.

“Mikael is here?” His brother breathed out, completely off the rails.

“No, not father.” Henrik denied. “My dad, he- he raised me- he was bitten by a werewolf, Nik and now he's *dying* . You have to help me. I can't lose him, he can't leave me. Please, Nik, help me!”

He won't help, Elijah thought, *knew* , even as he waited with baited breath. Niklaus' face was scrunched up, baffled, and his brown eyes ran over Henrik's face. *He won't help us, there's nothing loving about him anymore, no care for the family they once were.*

But Niklaus, in all his unpredictably, still managed to surprise him.

“Where’s he?” He asked, hoarsely.

Henrik’s face brightened like the morning sun, a large smile showing in a clear contrast with the tears that still fell.

“He's home. I'll show you the way.” Then he dropped the smile. “Will you two fight again if I let you go?”

Elijah wisely kept quiet, still undecided, but Damon's life was at stake.

“Where are the others?” He asked, watching his brother's face for his tellings. Niklaus was a very skilled liar, but Elijah was still his older brother - he knew how to differentiate between the blond telling the truth or not, which was how he knew Niklaus hadn't lied about their siblings not being at the bottom of the ocean.

“They're at a trunk on the west side of town.” Niklaus pushed him to the side, and Elijah went willingly, feeling out of sorts in every possible way.

“You'll take me to them later.” He warned, watching as Niklaus twisted his own wrist back into place, causing Henrik to wince in sympathy, and then set back his shoulder into place. When he got up, so did Elijah, still keeping his guard in case Niklaus made a move towards Henrik, but he wasn't *really* worried.

Henrik had shown he could defend himself, and while Elijah was unconscious Niklaus had been alone with Henrik for at least a couple of minutes. If Niklaus wished to cause their baby sibling any harm, he

would've already.

"Well, little brother? Show us the way." Niklaus waved at the door.

Henrik nodded, running to the front door, but he stopped on the threshold, looking back at where Katerina held on to Stefan.

"We can't leave him here with her. He's not gonna like it."

Niklaus walked up to Stefan and ripped him from Katerina's arms even as she scrambled to hold on to his body, and threw the younger Salvatore over his shoulder. All because Henrik asked him.

Elijah felt like he'd returned to the past, when all Henrik had to do was pout and Niklaus would go out of his way to give him whatever their youngest brother desired.

He didn't dwell on it, however, his priority at the instant was Damon. He made sure Henrik was in front of him at all times as they made their way downstairs, keeping a watch for any humans in case compulsions would be needed because it wasn't normal for two men and a child to be in company of an unconscious body.

"Hold the door open, Runt." Niklaus threw his keys in Henrik's chest, the boy scrambling to hold on to it, and it was a testament to how upset he was that he didn't complain at the jab to his height.

Henrik pressed on the car key's alarm button to find out which one belonged to Niklaus - the most attention gathering car in the entire street, obviously - and Elijah checked for witnesses while Henrik opened the back door and Niklaus shoved Stefan inside.

How quickly things changed, he wondered as he sat rigidly on the passenger side, hearing the sound Henrik's jeans made as his leg moved up and down anxiously on the back seat.

Niklaus drove fast, but skillfully as they left the center and made their way to the Salvatore's house on the outskirts of the town in complete silence. Part of him wanted to ask his brother to go faster, but Elijah didn't want his brother to notice his interest in Damon.

Niklaus had tried to ignite a conversation with Henrik, but the boy was clearly distraught and hadn't been able to concentrate on it.

Elijah made sure to warn Ms. Gilbert of Niklaus' arrival, sending her a message, although he wasn't sure she saw it because there were two

cars parked on the front of the Salvatore's mansion.

Henrik didn't even wait for Niklaus to park, dangerously jumping from the still moving car and running inside, yelling an invitation to their brother.

Niklaus left the car right where it was and they both rushed inside, going upstairs.

“Leave,” He heard his brother order and Elijah entered the room, seeing Alaric Saltzman by Damon’s side, a damp face towel on his hands.

He looked terrible, nothing like the passionate vampire he'd seen just two days ago. His chest was barely moving as he lay immobile in bed, his face and shirt sweaty from the fever caused by the bite.

The history professor - Damon's best friend, Henrik had once told him - hesitated, looking between them and Damon as if he'd have any chance at stopping them in case they wished to hurt the vampire.

Before Elijah could try and convince him, the man made up his mind, his eyes lingering on Henrik for a couple of seconds before he nodded and left. Elijah closed the door behind him.

Seeing Henrik by their side must have convinced him, somehow.

“Dad?” Henrik called out, sitting on the bed. Damon's only answer was the rolling of his eyes underneath his eyelids.

“Well?” Elijah pressed calmly, not letting it show that he felt a knot on his throat at the sight of the younger vampire so weak. It felt wrong, unnatural for Damon to look like that.

Niklaus sent him a strange look, huffing a laugh out of all things in such an absurd time and bit onto his forearm, piercing the skin and drawing out blood. He pressed the bitten part against Damon's mouth.

Elijah watched it, fascinated. “Your blood is the cure?”

“Funny little beings, these witches, aren't they?” Niklaus smiled smugly. “Everything needs to be perfectly balanced.” Then he frowned, looking down at Damon. “He's not drinking it.”

Elijah leaned forwards. Indeed, Damon was not drinking, his face completely slack. Niklaus ripped his forearm open again, since it had

already healed, and held the younger vampire by the back of his neck, pushing his arm against Damon's lips again forcefully.

What's wrong with him? Elijah dreaded looking down, but his eyes did it anyway. Thankfully, Damon's chest was still moving. He was still breathing, still alive.

"It's the conditioning," Henrik whispered.

"Conditioning?" Elijah asked. He, of course, knew what the word meant, but the understanding of it in relation to Damon fell short for him.

"He won't drink it." Henrik continued nonsensically and began shaking Damon by his shoulders. "Dad, wake up. Daddy, wake up!"

Elijah gently moved his brother to the side so he could reach Damon, grabbing the younger vampire's face and trying to forcefully open his eyes. When it didn't work, he tried patting it.

It was Niklaus who found out the solution, pulling Damon's upper lip back and rubbing his fingers over the muscle where their vampire teeth remained hidden.

It worked as a charm, Damon's vampire feet elongating and Niklaus shoved his forearm against Damon's mouth, massaging the younger vampire's throat.

This time, Damon began to suck, his Adam apple moving up and down.

"There we go, love." Niklaus sat on the bed, holding Damon's head above his lap and Elijah felt the burning need to push his brother away, to take his place. "Drink it up."

Distantly, he recognized the feeling as jealousy.

"Met this girl once, she was obsessed with vampire teeth. It was fun at first, bit boring in the long run." Elijah didn't think his brother could look more smug, but Niklaus' lips stretched out even further, the cat-like smile growing disgracefully large as he rested his face on top of Damon's dark hair and stared at Elijah. "Anyways, I let her touch them sometimes and she found out we have these muscles here-" He licked his top gum. "You just need to push them and they ignite. Much like a car, really."

When his little monologue didn't gain the reaction his brother desired, he continued. "She found out many other things as well." His voice lowered suggestively so Henrik wouldn't be able to hear, but thanks to his vampire hearing Elijah could.

His eyes fell into slits. "Niklaus, do not be crass."

"I'm just saying, brother." Damon's eyes fluttered slightly and Elijah abstained from replying.

Both Henrik and he went near, the boy all but climbing above Damon.

"Dad?"

"How do you feel?" Elijah asked, glancing on the closing bite to Damon.

"Like I was run over by a pack of horses." He groaned, touching Henrik's face with one hand and using his thumb to clean the tears. "I'm sorry I scared you, you weren't supposed to see that."

"We *will* talk about this later." Henrik admonished him, and Elijah made eye contact with Niklaus in amusement. Damon chuckled weakly, coughing a little.

"How about you grab him some blood, Henrik?" Elijah asked.

Henrik nodded. "I'll be back real fast." He stopped by the door, sticking his head out. "Don't let him move too much!"

"I am right here." Damon complained as Henrik left. "Where's Stefan? What happened?" Twisting his head around to see who was behind him, he openly scowled at Niklaus, trying to move away from his body. Elijah helped him, making no attempts to hide his pleasure when Damon let him. "What the fuck is he doing here? Did you tell him about Henrik?"

"I did not." He denied.

"Not quite the thank you I expected."

Damon scowled at Niklaus' words. "Nice to see you're already sitting down, cause it's not coming any time soon." He turned to Elijah. "Just what happened? I take it Wolfy here isn't into fratricide."

"Now listen here, you little-"

“He isn’t,” Elijah agreed, cutting his brother out. “He’s just, what is that insult you favor?” He made a show of thinking. “Oh, yes. A *dick*.”

“Elijah,” Niklaus growled, but stopped short when Henrik arrived, two blood bags in one of his hands and one in the other.

“I brought one for you too, Nik, since you’ve given him your blood and all.” Elijah took one of the blood bags, opening it. He extended it in Damon’s general direction, moving it slightly towards the younger when Niklaus made to take it and holding it closer to his lips so he could drink more easily.

His brother grumbled, accepting Henrik’s extended one easily, and Elijah began explaining what Damon had lost, although he didn’t know much apart from what he’d managed to put together.

Niklaus chimed in sometimes, and although Elijah hadn’t downright believed Stefan had used his baby brother as a bait or some sick sort of currency trading, it was slightly better to know Henrik had gone to Alaric Saltzman’s apartment all on his own.

Slightly, because what his brother did was extremely dangerous and could have ended badly. Niklaus had broken Stefan's neck and if Elijah hadn't been undaggered by the child so soon after being killed he could have taken longer to wake, which considering Niklaus' anger outbursts could have been dangerous.

He watched Damon confusedly listen to Henrik’s explainings, his cerulean eyes dancing between the boy and them. When their eyes met, Elijah smiled, daring to send Damon a playful wink and took in the younger’s flabbergasted face avidly.

He will get it sometime, he thought as the beast inside him growled.

“Stop your flirting.” Niklaus crossed his arms, stopping by his side. “You owe me an explanation.”

“I owe you nothing.” He enunciated slowly, turning his lips down to show his displeasure. “But I shall explain.” Elijah waited for the satisfaction to appear on Niklaus’ face before continuing. “ *After* you take me to our siblings.”

Chapter End Notes

SO, I actually wrote a Henrik and Stefan POV explaining how this all happened, but I didn't want to post it here since this fic is supposed to only have Elijah's and Damon's POV.
If you wish to see it, tell me and I'll post it as a one-shot.
ANYWAYS, hope you liked it, and comments are really appreciated <3

Chapter 6: Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE COMMENTS
＜33333333333333
Warnings for a panic attack this chapter

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Damon had gone to sleep feeling calmer than he had in weeks after a couple of hours surrounded by Henrik, Stefan and Ric. Everything was solved, mostly, with Elena alive and all of Stefan's friends too, and with the realization that Henrik's original hybrid of darkness brother was not, in fact, a psychopath that killed his own family, Damon didn't have to worry about him killing his son either.

Better yes, John was dead and Damon didn't have to deal with his annoying ass ever again. Or with Stefan brooding about something Elena's egg donor said to him.

Stefan was happy, having left after two hours of talking to meet with Elena, Henrik was happier than he'd been in weeks, Ric was finally back on track with Jenna, there was no new threat on the horizon and Damon was alive and well after two days of surety that this was it for him.

But after the calm comes the storm.

He should have known after all those hallucinations he faced and the almost overdose Stefan's brilliant idea of continuing to inject uncountable shots of vervain into him until he succumbed, - that after Damon tried to end his misery by taking his ring off and burning on the sun - Damon's brain would once again turn against him.

It had been almost seven months since the last time it happened - as it usually only occurred on the birthday of his capture - so he didn't recognize the signs until it was there.

The Annual Crisis™. He always imagined the word with a trademark at its side.

So when Damon woke up with the cold lodged on his bones, swimming on his veins, and followed by an all consuming hunger, he didn't think much of it - he was busier dealing with the

overstimulation of it.

Every noise he heard from nature outside only added to the horror his mind was forcing him to relive, and Damon knew, he was aware he wasn't back at the lab again, but everything was dark and he was cold and hungry and he couldn't see anything because a fog had taken over his bedroom.

"I'm home." He mumbled over and over as he struggled with the panic, trying to keep himself from falling into the same routine of always.

And just like the many times he tried to resist before, he failed.

In an effort to assure himself he wasn't down *there* again, Damon got to the basement without even realizing it, opening the freezer and hoarding blood bags inside his shirt by pulling it shirt up and folding it, but it was too on the open, anyone could get in and Damon couldn't breathe, couldn't calm down until his food was safe.

He glanced around, trying to find somewhere to hide, and then he was bending his body to fit inside the empty cupboard near the stairs, leaving a small crack so light could come in as he put the blood bags between his thighs and his chest.

He curled his body even further so as to protect the blood bags, wanting to open them and drink, but too afraid if he did it now he would go hungry later.

As the minutes passed, though he tried to hold on to the sense of reality, even that left him and Damon found himself back there, trapped underground, in that cell that was once his home.

He ripped one bag open, careful not to waste any blood even as his hands trembled and shook as if he was being electrocuted. He tried and failed to get his vampire teeth to show for a couple of tries before giving up and putting the straw on between his lips, starting to suck it slowly and hugging his thighs next to him as he did so, filled with the certainty that this time he would protect his food from whoever tried to take it from him.

He wasn't aware of how long it had been since he hid, but at some point he started rubbing his wet cheek against his knees in a self-soothing move, the grip on his chest that was making it hard for him to breathe without feeling like his lungs were on fire still not releasing its hold on him.

A new sound made its way around him, towards him, and the panic rose even further as a shadow appeared next to where he was and began to come closer.

“Damon?”

Damon hissed at the person, a man. A face appeared between the cracks of the cupboard’s door before it disappeared behind the fog Damon unconsciously caused to enter the place. He held on to it, controlling it as a second nature as it became darker and heavier, but it didn’t stop the man from walking past it.

It felt like a bucket of ice had fallen over him as he recognized the dark brown eyes glancing at him. Damon knew him, *where did he know him from?*

He scanned the stranger’s face, looking over the mole on his cheek and on the dark, expressive eyebrows of his.

The man, not a stranger, extended one hand slowly.

“Come here, you’re alright.” He said soothingly and a gentle hand was touching his arm, pulling him out of the cupboard and Damon scrambled to keep a hold of the blood bags. He distantly heard someone whine, but he couldn’t point out who and suddenly it wasn’t important because there was warmth all around him, pressing against him, holding him and the cold began to dissipate until he didn’t feel it anymore.

“You’re safe, it’s alright now.” A hand brushed the hair of his nape, holding Damon’s head against his collarbone and the smell of rich cologne hit his nose.

Damon pressed himself against the other, feeling his body get rocked by trembles, and the man pulled him even closer, the hand that wasn’t on Damon’s nape rubbing his back up and down and he felt safe, the panic finally receding slowly, leaving him numb.

Everything came crashing back at him. The eyes, the face, the scent.

Elijah .

“Are you back to me now?”

Ridiculously, Damon hid his face on his knees, feeling the shame rise inside him, as if that would erase the way he acted and cried. *What*

was wrong with him, acting like an insane person again, and in front of-

“Sorry.” He apologized, laughing wetly. “I’m a mess.”

“No, you’re not.” Elijah denied immediately, frowning deeply.

Damon scrunched up his face at that. “I am.” He reinforced it, because it was the truth. No matter how much he tried to hide it, he was a mess. An embarrassment of an adult that couldn’t keep himself together well enough. *A disappointment,* as his father loved to call him, even after Damon went against every moral, every belief he had and decided to fight a war that defended the right to use humans as properties before realizing sacrificing what he believed wasn't worth making his father love or care for him. Because in the end no matter how much he pretended, Damon couldn’t change the truth. “I’m weak.”

And now Elijah would see it as well.

“You aren’t. You’ve been put through a lot, that’s all.” Damon scoffed and Elijah put a finger underneath Damon’s chin, silently asking him to lift his face. Damon readied himself, hardening his face before doing so, afraid of what he was about to hear. “Someone hurt you, deeply, haven’t they?”

It was a metaphorical slap to his face.

“No.” He lied, even though there was nothing convincing about his tone.

Elijah’s lips curled sadly at his denial, though he didn’t pursue the subject, to Damon’s relief. The original was silent for a second, working on his jaw for a couple of seconds before meeting Damon’s eyes again, looking resolute. “I omitted something from you when I told you about my family’s tale of how we became The Original vampires.”

Damon let, enraptured, Elijah’s thumb caressed his jaw. “When I told you about the curse my mother put on Niklaus, I refrained from telling my ugly part on it.” Elijah’s hands dropped to his lap and his head hung down in shame as he stared at them. “Instead of warning my brother, or trying to help him, I was the one who held him in place while our mother shackled that part of him. That’s why Niklaus doesn’t trust me, perhaps even hates me. Not only I failed him, but I betrayed his trust, and no matter what I do, the truth remains that in that night the fear I felt of our father and the need to appease my

mother was bigger than my love for my younger brother."

Damon gaped at him, not knowing what to say.

That explained much of the relationship he saw between the brothers the night before, explained why Klaus would go as far as lying about throwing his siblings bodies in the ocean.

Elijah continued, lifting his head to face him. "But you're different. You risk your life again and again for your family, without a second thought. It's admirable, and it makes you one of the strongest people I've ever had the pleasure to meet."

If Damon was speechless before, he didn't know what he was now. He felt his cheeks burn, felt seen in a light he didn't think he ever was before, and he couldn't take his eyes away from the dark pools that were Elijah's. He was being pulled in, drowning in them, something in his chest was flourishing and-

"Damon? Is that you?"

Stefan .

Damon startled, backening away from Elijah and he didn't even realize the original had his arm laced around his waist until then. His brother appeared downstairs, already frowning.

"What are you doing on the floor?" Stefan asked suspiciously.

"I've dropped a couple of blood bags. Your brother was being a good host and helping me pick them up."

"Sure." Stefan dragged out, eyebrows rising and Damon busied himself with putting the bags back in the freezer, turning his back to Stefan so his brother wouldn't see his red eyes or the tear tracks on his face.

"Listen, about Klaus-"

"Can't you wait until he's not here to say about whatever it is you feel the need to express, Stefan?"

He heard Stefan sigh. "Yeah, alright. I'm gonna stay somewhere else tonight, then, while you deal with him."

Stay at Elena's while I get rid of him, most likely, Damon thought, and he didn't even know how he felt about that, first of all, because he couldn't just throw his son's older brother out of his house.

He waited a few beats for his brother to leave, but after a while, when Stefan didn't move from his spot it became clear he wasn't about to go back upstairs.

"Do you need something else?" Damon asked, starting to get out of ideas of how to not let his baby brother realize he was crying just a few minutes ago.

"Aren't you going back to bed?" His brother asked, and when Damon glanced at him through his fringe, Stefan was looking at Elijah, his arms crossed with a scowl on his face.

What is it with him now? He wondered, tired of trying to keep up with Stefan's moods. He seemed fine with Elijah just a few days ago, was it still about the not killing Klaus thing? Because it all seemed kind of irrelevant now.

"I was just leaving." He sighed in defeat when his brother still didn't move and picked the blood bag, taking Stefan's arm as he went so the younger wouldn't do anything stupid like picking up a fight when Damon was too weak to do something about it.

He did not think about how much he wished to stay downstairs and keep talking to Elijah.

His senses were all over the place when he woke up, mind still hazy from the werewolf bite induced fever, the panic attack he had that night, or from Stefan's little vervain trick. *I'm going to have a little talk with my brother* , Damon thought, as he struggled to turn on the shower with his shaky hands, eager to get rid of the sweat that clung to his skin.

He still felt some weird feeling on his body, - his sense of pain had gone strange after fifty years enduring torture after torture, replaced by something he couldn't name - a ghost of the symptoms of the bite, and when he tried to use his hearing to locate where his son and brother were in the house, his head started pounding.

Damon stopped immediately, deciding to just finish his shower and go search for them downstairs like normal people did.

He regretted not making an effort when his foot hit the last step of the staircase and he was met with the sight of Klaus Mikaelson standing in the middle of his living room, staring at a painting of Damon's ole

asshole of a father.

What was he still doing there?

Damon glanced at the old clock in the corner. It was already past midday.

“His personality was as bad as his looks.” He found himself saying, and Klaus turned to him slowly, eyes appreciative as he looked Damon up and down, as if Damon wasn’t looking like a trunk ran him over.

“Was it? My father was also a git of a man.”

Damon felt his lips twitch at that. “Good evening.” He tried.

They had started with the wrong foot the night before since Damon was feeling too out of sorts to bother being polite and Klaus had technically been the reason for him being bitten. Still, Klaus was Henrik’s older brother and although Damon wasn’t looking into being friends with him, not being on hostile terms would be good.

“Good evening, mate.” Klaus smirked. He was smug in a way Damon had never seen anyone else be before, his face cartoonish in an amusing way, as if he was a cat who got the canary. “So, Stefan’s older brother, right? He never mentioned you.”

Damon arched an eyebrow. “I would hope not, you’re not exactly on friendly terms from what I gather.” He looked around cautiously, keeping an eye on the hybrid. “Where is Henrik, by the way? And Elijah?”

“They’re in the kitchen. It is lunch time, after all.”

Damon glanced at the hallway that gave way to there. “And why are you here and not there with them?”

“I came to grab a drink. This is a nice collection, is it yours?” He nodded towards the whisky bottles and Damon eyed his empty hand suspiciously, Klaus obviously wasn’t after a Bourbon.

“Yes.” He dragged out, too tired for mind games. “Thank you.”

Was it long enough of small talk for it to be polite for him to leave? Damon *really* needed a blood bag.

“So, how is it that you’ve come to find and raise my little brother? Was it by the goodness of your heart?” Klaus’ tone was one of

nonchalance even as his eyes were sharp.

Oh, here we go. His head *pounded* .

“I didn’t so much find him as we found each other.”

The hybrid hummed at that. “Care to elaborate?”

“No.” Damon said in a deadpan tone.

That startled a laugh out of Klaus, even as his jaw clenched in annoyance. Between a blink and another, Damon was being cornered against the nearest wall, the hybrid up on his face and pressing his cheeks together in a tight grip.

Klaus’ brown irises thinned and largened as he started his compulsion. “Did you know about my connection to Henrik when you took him in?”

Damon scowled. *And here I thought* I *was too paranoid.*

“My brother stuffed me with more vervain yesterday than mommas stuff turkeys at thanksgiving, so back off.” He put his hand on Klaus’ chest, trying to push him away though he didn’t move. Then, just because he seemed incapable of shutting up. “You’re barking up the wrong tree.”

“Niklaus.”

Damon turned his face to the side, seeing Elijah in the end of the hallway. Elijah barely looked at him, his eyes set on the hybrid.

The originals had a staredown that was reminiscent of Damon and Stefan when his brother was about to do, or had just done, something stupid. Klaus was the first to look away, his lips curling up in one of his side smiles, though this one had a strange edge to it, and he stepped back, both hands up.

“I apologize, I was just checking.” The hybrid said to him, looking just a tad too innocent.

Damon gave him a clearly fake smile, scrunching up his nose and all and patted Klaus on the back none too gently, cursing silently at the fact that he did not have blood on his system because he would enjoy knowing it hurt at least a little. “Sure thing, old champ, old pal.” He waited a few beats. “Buddy.”

“You look pale, Damon. Would you like me to warm you a blood bag?” Elijah’s strong voice got his attention and he stopped on his passive aggressive interaction with Klaus, seeing the other approach.

Flashes of last night passed through his head and Damon found himself flushing in embarrassment and something else he would rather not identify.

Elijah didn’t have a single hair out of place, and he was now using a white, long sleeved shirt that hugged his upper body and every time he moved the fabric brushed against his skin and gave Damon a clear imagination of the muscles underneath.

The original stepped even closer, and Damon blinked dumbly at him as his personal space was once again invaded, too busy admiring the way Elijah’s eyes lightened up, turning an enticing shade of gold as the rays of the sun hit them.

Elijah smiled, something secret about it as he brushed a strand of Damon’s hair away from his forehead and Damon felt like under a spell, felt as if he couldn’t breath and had all the air of the world on his lungs at the same time and his heart was beating so fast it made him feel like he was human again and-

Damon startled, and everything crashed down on him as he was ripped away from whatever spell-like bubble he was just in.

Oh.

Oh .

Fuck .

Damon’s eyes widened as understanding filled him and he finally recognized what these hurricane of feelings meant and any and all thoughts he ever had dissipated apart from a single one, the most terrifying of all.

He was falling in love with Elijah Mikaelson.

Chapter End Notes

I'm not happy with this chapter at all, but I have been sleeping like shit this week and all my braincells are busy trying to keep

all the studies I have to catch up to AND this is like, the fourth time I rewrite this stupid thing cause I lost the perfect one and the other two were a shit show. So, yeah. There you go, I am sorry lmao also, I have a really bad hungover so if you see any grotesque mistakes pelase ignore it or give me a heads up. I'll probably reread this later anyways. <333333

Chapter 7: Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

> Notes: me seeing that I put Elijah in a fcking t-shirt instead of a shirt, cause I mixed the meanings on the last chapter: 🤦🏻‍♀️
> Honestly, not my greatest moment.
> Anyways, as usual, thank you so much for all the support! I really love reading your comments and I'm still in shock that the fandom is alive lol
> Anyways, hope you enjoy this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Elijah had never been one for being subtle when it came to showing his interest in someone, but he was also not one for being downright obvious.

He enjoyed lying in the line between those extremes, hiding nothing, but waiting patiently for a sign that his advances were well received.

It all came from being a predator, man and vampire.

He didn't, however, intend for Niklaus to find out about his interest in Damon anytime soon, but his brother had forever been observant.

Ultimately, Niklaus found out the very same night he met Damon, and now in all his childishness Niklaus was trying to get a rise out of him by flirting with Damon in subtle ways right in front of him, everytime Henrik got distracted by his food, which, since he was allowed to pick was one of his favorites.

Elijah's baby brother barely lifted his head from his plate.

And Damon wasn't even acknowledging him.

Elijah knew it was a possibility, almost a certainty that the younger vampire would avoid him after their meeting before dawn, when Elijah felt impotent for the first time in decades at the sight of Damon's tears.

The younger was clearly prideful, perhaps just a bit too much. His own brother, Stefan, seemed unaware of the horrors that plagued Damon. In fact, if Elijah were to guess he'd say no one knew.

Still, and he was ashamed to admit it, part of him was glad no one else had seen that sight of Damon before, only him. It was Damon in his rawness form, open and bare only for him to see. For him to help, to comfort, to protect.

His .

“Dad can howl for a really long time. It's like, really loud!” Henrik said excitedly, ripping him away from his thoughts and Elijah blinked, shocked at his own line of thinking. He glanced at Damon, and found the younger one already gazing at him. Damon looked away quickly.

“It seems I’ve lost myself in my own thoughts, what are you talking about?”

“It seems like his special ability has to do with animal transformation, such as wolves.” Niklaus nodded at Damon.

Elijah arched an eyebrow, looking at Damon, impressed. He never heard of a normal vampire that had more than one special ability and Damon seemed to have two, the other one being the manipulation of a fog-like substance. And yet his admiration was soon taken by worry - a werewolf’s transformation hurt. They had to break and regrow their bones in order for it to change into a wolf’s bone structure. “Is it true?”

Damon nodded, face closed off. “Yes.”

“Does it hurt?”

Damon opened his mouth and closed it for a moment, looking adorably stunned as if no one had questioned him about it before.

“Hum, not really.” He answered, seemingly to withhold information. Elijah studied him, but with Damon avoiding his eyes, it was difficult to try and read him.

It was another thing that confused Elijah; Damon sometimes was easy to read, in others almost impossible. Elijah didn’t know if it was something he did consciously, if he let himself be open on purpose, or if it was all deliberate.

“Dad is like, super fast, faster than the dogs at the park.” Henrik added and turned towards Niklaus. “Do *you* know how to howl?”

“Of course I know how to howl. And I am faster. Most likely.” Niklaus

smirked.

Henrik, however, didn't seem to believe it and frowned thoughtfully, theatrically. Elijah was reminded of the times the boy goaded him into a sword fight with Niklaus or into a race with Finn. “Didn’t you tell me you just transformed for the first time a couple of days ago?”

“That isn’t relevant.”

“It feels like it is, though.”

“Shouldn’t you be eating your veggies?” Henrik smirked at Niklaus' attempt to misdirect him, somehow looking exactly like Damon when he did it.

“I have news.” Elijah cut both of them before Henrik goaded Niklaus and Damon into a race and messed up with his plans for the afternoon, plans that now included making sure to have some time alone with Damon. “My Realtor called me. She found a house that fits the criteria. We must be there by 2 p.m.”

“Oh, and what criteria is it this time, brother?”

“We’re to leave at 1:30 pm.” Elijah did not indulge Niklaus in his playful tone. He had not yet forgiven him for killing him last time and much less was happy with his brother’s teasing from earlier.

As much as he despised it, he would have to discuss with Niklaus about all of it, openly. Damon was more important to him than Niklaus realized and Elijah wasn’t about to spend his life raging inside because his brother deemed it amusing to flirt with Damon as a way of provoking him.

“I wanna go too!” Henrik asked, looking at Niklaus and he with begging eyes. “Please?”

“Of course you'll be coming, H, it will be your home too, after all.”

An uncomfortable silence took over the silence at Niklaus' words, with both Damon tightening his jaw and Henrik playing with his food, suddenly very interested on his plate.

It was a complicated matter, one that if he could avoid for now, he surely would. Of course Elijah wanted Henrik to live with them, but even back when he first found out he knew Damon was important for Henrik. Their brother would never leave the man he called father.

Just seeing Damon's shoulders shrinking slightly in insecurity made Elijah's hands itch to comfort him, to assure the younger that he would never allow Henrik to be taken away from him.

"So you'll be staying in Mystic Falls, then?" Damon asked, changing the subject. His entire posture changed in a matter of seconds, with him looking more comfortable than ever and the tension that took over the kitchen dissipated. Elijah didn't realize how tense he was until he too leaned back on his own chair, relaxing his shoulders, though he knew Damon was forcefully letting the matter go. For now.

"Of course. For as long as we need." He glanced at Niklaus, who did not seem very agreeable, but his brother had the good sense to keep quiet. Niklaus would understand it soon enough. Damon's and Henrik's relationship wasn't one to be taken lightly or pushed aside, they were a family. Even if their brother had all of his memories of the past, Damon was still his father, had raised him and taken care of him for years.

Elijah had no qualms admitting it; if Henrik was to choose, even if it hurt the boy, he would pick Damon over them everytime.

Fortunately, that would not be a problem. For as long as he lived, and that was forever, Henrik would never have to choose. Elijah would be by his and Damon's side until the end of times.

Which was why, when searching for a house his needs were simple. It had to be located on the outskirts of town, somewhere far away from any bystanders that could see the fact they were not normal people. It needed to have at least eight rooms, one for him and every one of his siblings, one for Damon, obviously, although Elijah hoped soon it wouldn't be needed, and one for eventual visits. And at last, it had to be close to the Salvatore's house for emergency situations because this entire town seemed to be a magnet for troublesome supernaturals and they had many, many enemies.

The house of his choice would qualify as a mansion in normal standards, but to Elijah it was just big enough for his family to live in without wanting to murder each other. Big enough to put Rebekah and Kol in one end of the house and Niklaus on the other so they could stay far away from each other and Elijah could have peace.

He couldn't believe his Realtor managed to find one that fit all his criterias.

And better yet; Henrik loved it.

“It’s so freaking cool!” His brother looked around open mouthed. “I’m gonna see the rooms!”

“Don’t run while using the stairs!” Damon warned before he even moved, and Elijah had to chuckle along with Niklaus when Henrik changed from his earlier pose - one arm forward and one backward in a clear running pose - and started normally walking upstairs.

“Children,” The Realtor, Ms. Holloway, shook her head and smiled. She was an efficient, straight-foward woman, and Elijah had enjoyed working with her so far. “Are you his father?”

“Yes.” Damon nodded.

“Was your wife too busy to come?” Niklaus stopped studying one of the wall paintings from somewhere behind Damon and the realtor to look back at them in a quick motion. He met Elijah’s eyes in a pointed look right away, as if Elijah was low in intelligence and wasn’t aware of what was just happening.

But he wasn’t Niklaus, he wasn’t about to act like a caveman or throw jabs at people because of a simple question, especially considering Damon's attention seemed to be elsewhere, as his eyes kept fleeing towards the candlelight. “Oh, there’s no wife in the picture.”

“Oh, I am so sorry.” She put a strand of hair behind her ear, looking at him from beneath her eyelashes.

“I’m sure you are, love. It’s quite alright, however. Henrik's mother was a horrible, *horrible* woman.” Niklaus threw an arm around Damon’s shoulders. That seemed to get a reaction from the younger, who flinched slightly as his eyes went from the hand on his arm to Niklaus’ face.

Elijah was reminded vividly of the night before, when the gentlest of his touches dragged a shiver out of Damon. Now that he thought about it, the only person Elijah saw touch Damon was Henrik, with Stefan not seeming to be a touch feeling sort of person.

Elijah didn’t think the younger was averse to touch - Damon had melted against him after Elijah started rubbing his back - but he clearly had a strong reaction to it. Touch starvation, perhaps? Elijah met a few vampires that had that before, and the vampirism only made the symptoms stronger.

He was ready to intervene when Damon spoke.

“I’ll check on Hal. He’s been quiet.” Damon stepped away from Niklaus, smiling politely at Ms. Holloway. They could all hear Henrik walking around one of the rooms to the left, but the human didn’t.

Elijah watched as he went, and he wasn’t ashamed to admit that his eyes lingered on Damon’s back as he made his way upstairs.

“Oh, I must show you the pantry.” The woman clasped her hands together and waved them over as she walked away, explaining the mansion's best features as she went. After she finished the tour downstairs, they made their way upstairs.

The first thing he noticed when they entered the mansion was the stairs. Double, grandiose, a beautiful work with copper for the handrail. Rebekah would absolutely love it, Elijah was sure.

She always loved stairs - every house they stayed at had to have one.

The thought made Elijah feel lighter on his feet. He’d long lost hope of having his family complete, but now his dream was closer than ever. It would not be long before he awakened his brothers and sister, he just needed to make sure everything was ready first, and the only problem on the list was now checked out; they had a house to live in.

“Each bedroom has a suite, packed with a bathtub and a shower and, of course, a sink.” Ms. Holloway opened the suite’s door, showing them the elegant bathroom. Elijah nodded his head in appreciation, and Niklaus hummed interestedly at the size of the bathtub. “The closet is just on the other side of the room.”

One look at it, and Elijah was satisfied with its size.

“You’ll see that the other bedrooms follow the same pattern, except for the wallpaper, those are different.”

When they were going to enter the next one, he saw Henrik sneaking a peek at them on the last door. Niklaus stared unblinking at their brother, both of them seeming to get into one of their ‘who-blinks-first’ competitions and Elijah found himself unable to resent Niklaus at that moment when Henrik blinked first after seeing their brother making a face, the boy starting giggling before disappearing inside the room.

Niklaus excused himself before following their younger brother.

The scene gave him a sense not unlike one of a deja-vu, except Elijah

knew he'd never lived this moment before, and was instead rather sure he would live it again sometime in the future.

He could see them living there, all of them, together again after centuries.

"I'll take it." He was sure now. That house was perfect for them.

Ms. Holloway's face brightened, surely content for the commission she would gain after selling such a high profile house.

"Wonderful!" She smiled. "Oh, I left the papers downstairs. Just a second, Mr. Mikaelson."

"Certainly." Elijah waited just long enough for her to leave before making his way to the room his family were in.

"So you're really getting this house?" Henrik was asking Niklaus, and when Elijah came in the boy pressed both his hands against Niklaus' back and started pushing him out of the room. "Let's go, I'll show you my favorite room!"

"Will you now?"

When they walked past him, both of them had the exact same smile on their faces and it alarmed him as much as it did back in the start of the millennium. "What are you-" He tried to ask, but was cut off by Niklaus.

"Do try not to miss us much, brother."

He frowned, watching both of them leave. If it were just Niklaus he would be sure it was a rather unsubtle tactic to leave him alone with Damon - his brother switched like a lightbulb after their lunch earlier, seemingly noticing his provocations were not being well received - but that was Henrik, and he was fairly certain his younger brother was not aware of Elijah's courting of, well, his father.

Damon was sending messages on his phone by the balcony, if the motion of his thumbs were to be trusted, and he put it in his pocket when he saw Elijah approaching.

He stopped by Damon's side, almost touching him as he leaned his elbows against the rail. Damon stole a quick look in his direction before looking away, face blank.

“You’re buying the house.” Damon said, looking over the large garden. It could easily be considered a well taken care of field. “It’s beautiful.”

But Elijah wasn’t there for small talks.

“I know. One of the rooms is for you.” Damon turned to him, shocked, and Elijah took the opportunity to admire the slightly widening of his eyes, and the small flush that took over his cheeks. He looked beautiful like this, open, and not using a mask of indifference such as the one he’d been using around Elijah all day.

“What?”

“Hopefully Henrik will wish to spend some days here, and *hopefully* , so will you.”

Damon opened and closed his mouth a few times before a self-deprecating side smile took over. “I’m not sure your brother would like that, he doesn’t seem to like me much.”

“My brother will come to love your presence quickly.” He tilted his head down, leaning forwards towards Damon and was delighted when the other didn’t move away. “I know I did.”

Damon’s eyes met his, changing focus quickly as if he didn’t know which one he should focus on and Elijah pulled away just in time for the Realtor not to notice anything when she came into the room.

She waved the stack of papers, smiling. “Shall we sign?”

Elijah did not know, and mostly certainly did not care, for what business Niklaus had at night, but all the pieces fell too perfectly into place for him not to act on it.

Henrik went to sleep early, still tired after spending the night before awake till late hours, Stefan was out, having left after passing by just to check on his older brother and Damon was reading by his bed, if the occasional sound of paper being flipped was to be trusted.

Elijah was silent as he went, making a quick stop by the basement to put a few blood bags inside the cooler, and he started running as soon as he was outside, having left his car hidden a few miles away, not wanting to get Niklaus’ attention to his moves lest he try to stop him.

He had called Yvan, a vampire Niklaus had been using as a chauffeur, as soon as he was away from his brother's earshot, in the car on his way back to the Salvatore's and asked him to drive the trunk to the address he was sending him by message.

Yvan was sitting on the stairs to the mansion when he arrived, resting his cheek against his hand. The man got up as soon he saw the car, squinting to make sense of who was driving before recognition flashed his face.

"Mr. Mikaelson."

"Mr. Korn." He greeted back, taking out the cooler as he walked towards the house. When he came out, Yvan had already opened the trunk's back where the coffins were at. "Would you help me carry my siblings into the living room, please."

He picked the one he knew was Rebekah and lifted the end of it at the same time as Yvan took the other side and they carried her inside, carefully doing the same with Kol and Finn. His mother's coffin was the only one brought to the basement, with the other three lined up in the living room.

Yvan watched anxiously as Elijah approached him. "Thank you, Mr. Korn." He told the man. "Now, you will forget everything you saw today. You are free to go. Do take the trunk with you, please."

He watched as the man left, waiting until the trunk's motor disappeared from earshot before starting to open up the coffins and swiftly pull the daggers out.

Finn would be a pain to deal with, Elijah thought as he let the dagger in. That one would be decided by democracy since they all would have to suffer from his presence together.

He crouched down near the fireplace and took out a box of phosphor to light it up and watched with anticipation as the fire began to rise and burn hotter, shades of orange and red mixing together and looked back at the opened coffins, seeing that Rebekah and Kol were already starting to slowly lose their ashen look.

Two birds with one stone. He'd have his family reunited again and *yes*, Niklaus *would* regret killing him that last time.

Chapter End Notes

If one were to ask me I'd say Elijah doesn't hold grudges… of course not… 🐍🐍🐍🐍🐍🐍🐍🐍🐍
Hope you enjoy it, this week as a mess but the Henrik pov one shot is coming out soon, I just have to revise it
It took me forever to find a nickname for Damon to call Henrik, but there it is. Hal.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

> Thank you all *so* much for all the comments, guys, really, I love them so much ;)
> Hope you enjoy this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After making sure Henrik had already eaten breakfast and was now getting ready to study, Damon followed the noise in the kitchen, sure he was going to find Stefan brooding there, but was instead surprised by Klaus sitting on top of the counter with a bourbon in his hands.

The same Klaus that had bumped into him the night before and Damon had seen carrying his bags out.

“What are you doing here? I thought you had decided to sleep at your new house?”

“Well, hello to you too, Damon. Good morning.” At his unimpressed look, the hybrid took a big gulp of the whiskey. “I hope you don’t mind me going through this bottle.”

Damon stared at him, his eyebrows raising gradatively as he took in Klaus’ wrinkled clothes - ripped at some places, stained with blood in others. “What happened to you?”

Klaus’ eyes were dull when he met Damon’s and the blond let out a long suffering sigh before downing the rest of the bourbon. “My now least favorite brother undaggered my siblings last night.”

“Ah.” Damon winced in sympathy. Elijah had told him about it, but Damon hadn’t thought he would keep it from Klaus. Not that Klaus didn’t deserve it, he sure would be mad as hell at Stefan if his brother dared to keep him in a coffin for decades. “They ganged up on you, didn’t they?”

“Like I was a piñata in a child’s party.” Klaus sighed again, serving himself more whiskey. “Would you mind it terribly if I stay here for today? It’ll take a while before my siblings…” He waved his hand vaguely.

“Stop trying to kill you?” He guessed.

Klaus chuckled at that. “Oh, that I don’t think they’ll ever stop doing.” Damon took a glass from the sink and grabbed a blood bag. “But hopefully H’s presence will soften their cold, wretched hearts.”

Damon was silent for a moment, filling his glass with blood. He couldn’t work out if Klaus was so self-absorbed he didn’t realize his siblings had every right to be mad, or if he simply did not want to think about their side.

“Why did you do it?” The blond frowned, confused. Damon reformulated. “Why did you kill them?”

“They were being insufferable, why else?”

Damon rolled his eyes. “Liar, liar, pants on fire.”

He knew for a fact Stefan had been annoying the shit out of Klaus these past few days and the hybrid didn’t put a single finger on his brother - Klaus had more self-control than he wanted people to know.

Klaus smirked, shrugging lazily before leaning towards him. Damon forced himself to keep still as the blond invaded his personal space. What was it with the Mikaelsons and their lack of respect for it? “The reason does not matter much - anyways, you can be quite annoying too, no offense.”

Would you look at who’s talking…

“None taken.”

“And your brother is even worse, so tell me. How is it that you two manage to be so close?”

“Well, for starters we make a point not to kill each other.” He took great pleasure in watching the hybrid’s smirk disappear. Klaus leaned back, and it almost looked like he was pouting. Damon’s lips twitched. “Listen, you’ve been a dick to them, just apologize.”

“For what, saving their lives?” Klaus dragged out, growing stiff for a second before changing the subject entirely. “Elijah has arrived.”

Damon made sure to dive into that information later as he turned towards the kitchen’s door, tuning in his hearing. A second later, someone used the door’s knock.

Damon did not run to open it, although it was a close thing.

He felt stupid, out of sorts with what to do. The last time he fell in love with someone it was Katherine, and she was not the best example of the 'great people to fall in love with' category, but Damon liked the feelings that came with being in love, he liked how he felt, how it made him feel alive. But it just so happened that he couldn't afford to let go, couldn't trust himself to let go. The last time he did, his admittedly not best life had turned into a hell that lasted over a century and Damon couldn't risk it with Henrik being around.

And then there was that; how strange would it be for Henrik if he knew Damon liked his older brother?

So the night before, on the short window of time before Klaus returned from whatever he'd been doing all night and Elijah left to wake up his siblings, he had called Ric - and he didn't say who it was that he liked, of course not - but Damon did tell him about how he felt and Ric laughed at him for two minutes straight before asking what Damon planned to do about it and after spending half a night awake, Damon finally came to a satisfying conclusion.

Nothing.

This time he would do absolutely nothing for many reasons, one of them being Elijah was his son's older brother and the other was the most obvious of all; Elijah probably wasn't into men, and especially not into Damon, who had cried like a child because of something that happened a decade ago and-

He was not going to think about it.

"Elijah." He opened the door.

It was a struggle to keep his eyes from going down. Elijah was wearing a suit, as always, but this time his shirt was open and Damon could see a flash of the skin of his chest as the original put his hands on his pockets. "Damon. Good morning, have you slept well?"

He stepped away for the original to enter, but Elijah didn't move, his eyes not leaving Damon's as he waited for an answer. "I have." He nodded, for great measure and he hadn't noticed it before, but when Elijah smiled his eyes gained a warmth to it and he looked so different it was impossible for Damon not to grin too. "Have you?"

"I had the most relaxing sleep. May I?" He waved at the door.

“Sure, come in.” Damon held on his breath as Elijah walked past him slowly, passing by so close they almost touched. He swallowed. “So, I heard you really did wake your siblings.”

Elijah sent a sharp glare towards the inside of the house. “ I see Niklaus came crying to you.”

They both heard a growl coming from the kitchen and they exchanged an amused glance at Klaus’ expenses. “Did you call him there without telling him your siblings were awake?”

“I may have forgotten to add that small detail.” Elijah shrugged innocently, as if he really did forget, but there was a glint to his eyes that let Damon know it was all on purpose. “That is actually why I am here. Would now be a good time for me to bring Henrik to see them?”

Damon looked upwards, a bit to the left, to where he knew he knew was Henrik’s room. Henrik would love to see his siblings again, Damon knew, even though his son barely mentioned them to him because he thought they were gone and Damon did have plans with Ric, whom he had promised to meet at the Grill in an hour. “What are you going to tell him? You said they were ‘gone’ the last time he asked about them.”

Elijah’s eyebrows furrowed slightly. “I’m hoping he doesn’t ask too many questions.”

Damon huffed a short laugh.

“Yeah, good luck with that.”

Henrik would not let the topic go until he knew everything and he hoped they’d find a good excuse or at least, for Klaus’ sake, that the kid wouldn’t be too upset.

Elijah’s hand twitched and Damon watched the motion repeat for a couple of times before the original’s voice got his attention. “I was wondering,” Their eyes met and once again Damon felt caught by Elijah’s dark stare, unable to move as the man came closer. “Would you like to have dinner tonight? My siblings would love to meet you.”

Damon felt, *heard* his heartbeat speed up, trapped on the end of the first question for a second before he caught on to the second one.

He didn’t actually know if he *wanted* to have dinner with them, actually, scratch that. He *did not* want to have dinner with them, Klaus

already didn't like him much, the odds were against him and Damon wasn't as sociable as he was before, well, *everything* .

But it was Henrik's *family* , he was bound to meet them, and Damon wanted to be at least on good terms with them. Besides, it was best if at least he had Elijah with him when it happened because he knew that even without asking, the original would help him should he need it.

That thought scared him as soon as it came. There he was, trusting Elijah to help him when he barely knew the guy.

The memory of two nights ago flashed on his head, when Elijah managed to wake Damon from the nightmare he was trapped him, ripping him away from the panic attack with a hug that left him feeling warm and protected in a way he hadn't ever felt before.

He was so screwed.

"Can I bring Stefan?" He offered his best cute smile. With Stefan there he could use him as a barrier between him and Elijah and he'd be more comfortable. "I'll make sure he's on his best behavior."

Elijah's lips twitched into a side smile, and he licked his lips. Damon followed the movement with his eyes, feeling his mouth become dry. "Of course, whatever makes you comfortable."

"Great, I'll go ask Henrik to come down, then." He said, as nonchalantly as he could, before turning away and starting to make his way upstairs, towards Henrik's room.

His son was sitting by the mahogany table, his tongue between his lips while he wrote down the answers to the exercises Damon had marked down on the book for him. He looked back at the door as soon as it opened and Damon smiled down at him.

"Are you having any problems?" He ruffled the boy's head, looking over the answers to the Italian questions he had selected. The grammar was perfect.

"Nope, I'm good." Henrik looked over the pages. He had always been good with languages, and caught on quite quickly on the ones that derived from Old Norse. Now Damon knew the talent hadn't come from nowhere.

"Are you finished? Elijah is downstairs."

Henrik's chair made a screeching noise when he pushed it back, rushing towards the door. "He said he would have a surprise for me!"

"Yeah?" Damon watched him leave the room. "Go ask him what it is, then."

He picked up the notebook Henrik was writing on, using it as an excuse to stay in the room and not go downstairs, not wanting to be part of the conversation when Elijah explained to Henrik what happened to their siblings.

As he went over Henrik's answers, he also listened in to the conversation happening downstairs and grew amused to the point of chuckling a couple of times when Klaus joined in with his excuses, excuses that from Henrik's tone of voice, he was *not* buying.

He sat down on the table, glad he wasn't down there.

Damon had made sure Henrik was taking his phone, phone charger and a couple of snacks before letting him go with his brothers to spend the day at their house, making his son promise to keep an eye on his messages as Damon would be checking up on him at least once an hour.

Henrik had never spent so long away from him.

He'd left soon after them, what with their conversation about the other originals' return taking around twenty minutes to conclude, getting on his mustang and driving towards the town's center.

He was almost at the Grill when Ric asked him to change meeting spots and for them to talk somewhere more private, at his loft.

Damon sent him a quick message to give him a heads up about his arrival and changed lanes, since he was now going to take the right turn instead of the left.

He waved at Carol Lockwood, who was at the town square in front of Ric's building before walking inside and starting his ascent.

He was just about to knock on his best friend's door when a noise got his attention and Damon turned around, already on guard.

There was no one to be seen, but something was wrong. That was

what he didn't like about Ric's place and Damon had told him about it many times before; it was big, and nice, but it was empty. Almost no one lived on the same floor because each loft took too much space and that made it dangerous, especially for a vampire hunter.

A flash of green came from his left, straight in his direction and he grabbed it mid air, taking a quick glance at it.

A vervain filled syringe.

Damon concentrated on his senses, listening in. "Who's there?" He asked, leaning back against the wall so as to not have to worry about watching his back. "Better show up before I find you or I'll make it hurt while I kill you very, very slowly."

"My, my. You're so serious now. You used to be more fun, Damon." Katherine showed up, smirking at him.

He narrowed his eyes, adjusting his grip on the syringe before throwing it back to her. She grabbed it, still smirking smugly, but let out a pained groan when the plastic broke on her grip, shaking her hand to get rid of the burning liquid.

It was his turn to smirk, having crushed the siringue just to the point of almost breaking before throwing it back at her. "What do you want, Katherine?"

She shrugged, pouting at him and Damon forced himself not to recoil when she ran her index finger through his chest.

To think that he ever loved her, that once he would have given everything to see her happy. "You're so *mean* , I just wanted to chat. You've been avoiding me, we never got a chance to reconnect. I've missed you, Damon."

"I'm sure you did." He smiled falsely, slapping her finger away. "But I haven't, so chop chop, move on to the next target, this one isn't going to fall for it."

Katherine huffed, her face closing off. "Alright, you're not in the mood for playing."

"Never am when it comes to you." His eyes flew towards the hallways and the stairs, looking for a sign of something else being wrong. He didn't trust Katherine not to have an ace up her sleeve to try and force him to do whatever it was that she wanted. "Now enough of your

games, where's Ric? How did you get his phone?"

"Took from the counter when he left for the bathroom back at the Grill." She smiled, taking the phone in question out of her back pocket and waving it in front of his face. Damon snatched it from her hand.

He put it in his pocket. "What do you want with me?"

"I want your help."

He raised an eyebrow. "Do you now?"

She started walking right and left in front of him, her high heels making a clicking sound at every step.

"You're not an idiot, Damon. Never were." She began, and he recognized her tactic of manipulation right away as she complimented him. "You know they're going to take him from you."

"What are you talking about?" He frowned.

"I'm talking about the boy. Henrik, isn't it? You were with him in Sacramento, back in 2002." Her smirk changed into something flirtier. "That's right, I kept track of you."

Not a good enough tracker, then, if she didn't realize he vanished for half a century.

But she was right, he had been in Sacramento for a couple of weeks in 2002. It was one of the first places he went to after escaping.

She saw him right when he was at his lowest, trying to navigate a world he didn't know and she didn't even bother to greet him.

He didn't think Katherine could ever hurt him more than when he realized she was playing both him and his brother or when he was told she had never been at the tomb, just a few days after finally finding Stefan.

But she could.

He swallowed, feeling a lump on his throat as he remembered the fear and the confusion that clung to him during those years. He'd been hungry, desperate and lost. Everything had been an overstimulation during those days and she could have helped, but she didn't *care* .

"You don't know the Mikaelsons, Damon, but I do. There's no place for

anyone else but them in that family. They will *never* accept you because you're not one of them and no matter what you do, you will never be."

And now she was throwing his fears right at his face.

He crossed his arms, tired of her games. "What is it to you?"

"I'm tired of running, Damon." She leaned back against the rail. "I want them gone, and so should you. They will take him away from you sooner or later, you know I'm right."

This time, when she touched his hand, he *did* recoil, feeling his skin crawl under her touch, but Katherine just smiled as if he was being petty and Damon let her believe it was so, reigning on his body's impulses to pull away again.

Katherine took out a pen, pulling the cap off with her teeth, and wrote down a sequence of numbers on the palm of his hand.

"That's my phone number. Call me when you come to your senses and get over your self righteous anger."

He stood there, watching as she went, his head replaying over and over again Klaus' words from yesterday.

It'll be your home too, after all.

He clenched his fist, going to the stairs. He wouldn't let Katherine get into his head, he wouldn't.

He hoped Ric was ready to drink because Damon was about to finish most of the Grill's supply of bourbon.

Meeting Ric had surely helped, at least so he could forget about the mess that had been made of his thoughts after meeting Katherine, and Damon kept his promise to Henrik, checking up on him every hour until the boy asked him when he was going to come because he missed him.

He could remember as if it was yesterday a toddler Henrik running towards him crying every time he steered too far away to the point he couldn't see Damon anymore. Henrik grew better as the years passed, letting Damon leave his sight by the time he was five and managing to

sleep on separate beds sometime after turning seven, but they had never spent almost an entire day away from each other.

It was almost an hour away from dinner time, but Damon was already on his way because of Henrik's message.

Damon gripped the wheel tightly as he drove, worrying his teeth onto his bottom lip. What did Elijah, Henrik and Klaus tell their siblings about him, exactly? Did he say anything about Damon at all apart from the 'he raised our brother while we didn't know he existed' thing?

Even before meeting Katherine he had been worried about meeting them, but now Damon was even more nervous about it. Damon was horrible with first meetings, he always ended up either being annoying or showing his worst side - *that was a disaster* .

He stopped the car a few feet before the beginning of the huge fountain on the front of the mansion, letting his forehead fall onto the wheel as he let out a deep, noiseful sigh.

I don't want to do this, what if I just cancel?

He could turn back, call Elijah, say there was an emergency and ask him to bring Henrik home.

There was a tap on his window and Damon startled, lifting his head in dread only to see Elijah there. Relief washed through him, followed by embarrassment. When Elijah tapped on the window again, motioning for him to down it, Damon complied, faking a smile. "Just admiring the fountain for a bit."

The original leaned over the window, chuckling lowly. The sound made the hairs of Damon's back stand deliciously. "Having second thoughts, are we?"

He faced the road ahead. "Your family is quite intimidating."

"True, but I don't believe there's an ounce on your body that cares about that." Damon resisted the urge to chew on his lips to try and let go of the anxiety. "Are you perhaps waiting for your brother to arrive?"

"Stefan is not coming." He said, glad he didn't let the betrayal bleed into his voice. Stefan gave an excuse about Klaus giving him back memories about his friendship with him and how he'd been in a

relationship with Rebekah Mikaelson almost a century ago as a way to get out of the dinner.

Elijah ran his eyes over Damon's clothes. "I don't think I've ever seen you wearing a suit before. It fits your beauty."

Damon snorted, looking down at his clothes. Elijah had told him it was a formal dinner, and so he used a suit he'd bought for whenever the Founder Council planned another reunion disguised as a party.

"Do you think being cute is going to make me get out of this car?"

He regretted the words as soon as they came out. So much for doing nothing.

Elijah laughed, throwing his head back and Damon drank in the sound, growing hot at the sight of his neck displayed like that and he shifted himself on his seat when his eyes zeroed on the hint of a tongue between Elijah's teeth. The meaning of the phrase 'handsome devil' made clear sense at that moment.

The original leaned against the window again and this time his face approached Damon so much their noses almost touched. "I don't think anyone has called me *cute* before."

They have, he thought breathlessly, *just not to your face.*

Elijah was still smirking when he pulled back, opening the door and holding out a hand for him to leave. Damon looked at it, then at Elijah, the cold air bringing his rational thoughts back to him again. "Would it help if I assured you my siblings hold you in high regards for everything you did for Henrik?"

It was his time to chuckle, hoarsely, his mouth felt dry. "Like Klaus did when he thought I was a stalker sent to bring his demise?"

"Niklaus has an acute case of paranoia. He likes you, even if it may not seem like it." Elijah flexed his hands, asking silently for him to take it.

He was never one to be able to ignore his feelings.

He took Elijah's hand. It was even softer than it looked, warm and slightly wider than his own. Elijah closed Mustang's door with his other hand, and Damon let himself be pulled towards the mansion.

The original did not let go until they were at the door, holding his hand firmly as if he thought the moment he let go Damon would turn away and escape.

There was no escape for him, not that he wanted any.

Chapter End Notes

Damon while talking to Ric about Elijah: I'm gonna stand back and do nothing
Also Damon (to Elijah): you're cute
anYWAYS I hope you enjoyed this chapter lol
Get ready for *horny Damon* cause this boy has been needing to *get some* for a few decades

Chapter 9: Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

> Thank you all for all the comments, you guys have no idea how many times I reread them during the week lol
> As always, hope you like this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The doors opened as soon as they stopped in front of it, and he eyed the obviously compelled human greet him.

Klaus appeared first, a glass of whiskey on his hands that Damon was sure was not his first and was followed by a blonde woman around Stefan's age, wearing a fancy golden dress.

Rebekah.

"Oh, he's the complete package, I see." She looked him up and down and Damon was reminded way too much of Klaus when they first met. She extended a hand, palm down for him to kiss. "I'm Rebekah, Elijah's little sister."

"Yes, ignore my existence while I stand right beside you, sister." Klaus dragged out.

"You don't want me to notice you right now, Niklaus." She bared her teeth at the hybrid before turning back to Damon and shaking her fingers lazily. "Well?"

He put on his charm, kissing the back of her hand with a smirk. "I'm Damon."

"Damon Salvatore, yes. I've heard much about you today." She seemed vain, but her eyes shone with the same intelligent glint Elijah's did. "My brothers couldn't stop talking about you."

Henrik came running from the other chamber, wearing the same tux he wore at one of the few Founder's Party children were allowed at, complete with the little bowtie Damon thought made him look adorable - though when he convinced his son to wear it he used the word 'charming'.

Henrik's expression changed into one of relief when he saw him and

the kid threw himself at Damon, grabbing him by his waist. Damon immediately hugged him, rubbing his back.

Damon had wanted to give him space to be with his siblings, even though he missed him, and Henrik seemed fine in every call, but maybe he was just as jittery as Damon over them staying away from each other. He should have called his kid and asked him how he really was the second he received that 'I miss you' message, but at the time it had been only twenty minutes since the last call, he hadn't wanted to seem… overbearing. Clearly, he should've, because Henrik's back was tense as a rock and there was a desperation to his grip. "Hey, missed me?"

"Yeah." Henrik inhaled, voice coming out muffled as he was pressing his face against Damon's chest.

He caressed the dark strands of his kid's hair. His hair was as soft as it had always been. Damon missed when he was younger and Henrik still allowed him to pick him up. "Did you have fun today?"

Henrik nodded, his shoulders relaxing at each passing moment and Damon only realized how tightly wound he himself had been until now, a knot he was unaware of easing on his throat.

When he turned his attention back to the originals, he found the three of them staring at him with the same intense look in their eyes and their siblinghood had never been more clear as of now.

"We don't part away from each other often." He offered, knowing it was strange to have such a strong reaction to a half a day spent apart, but for most of Henrik's life there was only Damon.

Henrik may have gotten better as the years passed by, but Damon had never stayed away for so long and it was obviously too much for the twelve year old.

With one last inhale, Henrik stopped shoving his face against Damon's chest and turned to his siblings, though Damon didn't fail to notice the boy was still holding on to him.

"Ah, I just met your *favorite* sister." Damon teased, trying to lighten the mood and it got the reaction he was expecting. Henrik scowled at him in betrayal while blushing at the same time and Rebekah cooed, delighted.

"And only one too." Klaus let out. Rebekah's face closed off and she

turned to send an icy glare at her brother. Klaus lifted both his hands, yielding silently.

“Is that what you said about me?” She faced Henrik again, still smiling. Henrik was so tall she barely passed him and Damon was sure if she took off her heels they would be almost the same size.

“Yes.” Henrik admitted begrudgingly, trying to hide his shyness by putting a brooding front and Damon chuckled, messing up his hair.

“Did he call me his favorite brother too?” A voice he didn’t know asked and Damon saw a man - a really familiar looking man, and it wasn’t just because he was a mix of Elijah and Klaus - enter the room.

He saw something flash through the dark brown, almost black eyes and Damon scrambled through his memories to find out where exactly he knew the stranger he was sure was Kol Mikaelson from.

“You’ve made the top three.” Henrik joked and Kol chuckled before extending a hand towards Damon.

“Kol Mikaelson.”

“I’m Damon.” He gripped Kol’s hand, shaking it. “Have we met?”

Kol smiled and contrary to what it did to his siblings, whose faces’ lightened at the action, his darkened. “I would know if we did. One could never forget someone like you.”

Damon frowned, confused. Was that a yes or a no?

“Now that we have all been properly introduced, should we start feasting? Henrik must be starving after playing baseball all day.” Elijah came to his side, slowly putting a hand against his back and at once every sense he had started focusing on the warmth of it as he let himself be guided into the dining room.

Rebekah started walking alongside him. “... him well.”

“Mhm?” He questioned, having missed the beginning of her phrase.

She smirked before motioning Kol and Henrik walking ahead, and every time Kol pointed at a candle, Henrik made it flicker. Damon couldn’t see his face, but he was sure the boy was sporting his proudest look. “I said you taught him well. He’s a good pitcher.”

“And a far better batter.” Klaus added, coming from behind him.

Damon didn't even realize he moved closer to Elijah, bumping into him, as the hallway became too small for four adults to walk alongside each other.

"I used to play baseball with my brother when I was a human." He offered. It was one of the few things that remained the same as 1864 and Damon had taken Henrik to a different park everyday to try and get the boy to grow accustomed to the world outside.

Rebekah nodded. "Stefan, yes. It's a small word, I've met your brother a century ago."

Met. Understatement of the century.

He just didn't name drop Stefan because he didn't know if *Rebekah* knew about them being siblings, but Klaus must have filled her in with everything that happened during the years she spent in a coffin.

"So it seems."

Damon wondered how horrible it must be to wake up almost a century later and find out your lover was dating some other girl. Did she know about *that* ?

"He's not coming to dinner." Damon added, because he *had* told Elijah he would be bringing his brother and maybe Elijah had told her about it. "He just found out about your history together so he thought it was best to take some time to… work through it."

"I see." She forced a smile, cheering up forcibly. "That's good, I have many questions to ask you and your brother would only distract me."

"Do try not to jump at him with your questions, Rebekah." Elijah said.

"Oh, I wouldn't dream of jumping him at all, brother."

Damon grinned at her play of words, hearing both Kol and Klaus crackle, but when he turned to Elijah, the man was neither smiling nor amused, settling instead for pinching the bridge of his nose while he stared right ahead.

"How do you like our mansion?" Rebekah asked, showing off a picture he was pretty sure had been stolen from somewhere.

"Must we really start on boring small talk?" Klaus dragged out.

"It's charming." He ignored the hybrid completely. "What do you

think?”

“Oh, I love it. And I just *adored* the stairs, seems like the perfect place to push one of my older brothers when they're been irritating.” Her last words were clearly directed at Klaus, who rolled his eyes at her.

“For goodness sake, Rebekah. When will you get over it?”

“When you apologize. Or die. Either way I'd be happy.” She said in a low tone of voice.

Damon wondered if that's how the others felt when they saw Stefan and he fighting.

He hadn't seen the dining room before, but it was a wide space with a fireplace decorated by bricks on it. The fire brought warmth to the room that looked so old Damon wasn't sure it had a heater.

The table was set, large in both width and length and a banquet was served above it. Damon suddenly felt glad for coming there so early - Henrik would eat so much he was afraid the boy would have problems sleeping.

Henrik was waiting for him by the table, and glued himself to Damon's side once he entered the r4oom. Before he even decided where to sit, Elijah was calling for them at the head of the table.

Damon let Henrik pick, wanting the boy to sit where he was more comfortable, and Henrik skipped a chair, leaving an empty space between Elijah and him.

Kol and Klaus both sat on the other side of the table, and Rebekah on the other head, sitting opposite to Elijah.

Once everyone was seated, Henrik started serving himself, getting up to reach the farthest plates on the table and Damon did his best to ignore Kol's and Rebekah's stares flickering from Henrik to him.

They waited just long enough for him to serve himself a slice of lasagna - one of his favorite foods - before starting the dreaded interrogation.

“So, *Damon Salvatore* .” Kol started, dragging out his name for some reason. “When did you meet Henrik? He doesn't seem to know.”

Damon glanced at his son, who was glaring at his older brother, his

cheeks slightly inflated as Henrik always seemed to do unconsciously when he was angry.

Damon frowned at him, not knowing why he'd gotten upset so abruptly.

“I said *we don’t know the date*.”

“It was 2001.” Damon gave his son a quick squeeze on the arm, smiling at him to show everything was fine.

“What month?”

“Would you like some wine?” Elijah asked, holding the bottle's neck just above Damon's cup.

“Yes, please.” Damon glanced at Elijah before turning to Kol again. “I don't know the month.”

“Can I have some?” Henrik butted in, lifting his cup.

Damon wrapped his hand around the boy's, pushing it down along with the cup he was holding. Both Elijah and Klaus chuckled, and even Rebekah smiled. “You can have some *nice, cool* juice.”

“Man, I miss the old days.” Henrik mumbled.

“Don't know the month or don't remember?” Kol continued.

Damon gritted his teeth, feeling a spark of anger before he forced it down, relaxing his features. Why couldn't Kol ask about something else?

He took a sip of the wine, plastering a false smile on his face. “I don't remember.”

He didn't *know*. Carving a line on the walls of his cell as a way of counting the days became too depressing once Damon's hope of ever escaping left him completely.

He knew it had to be longer than two months - which was the date of their escape, February 19 of 2002 - because Henrik had grown too much during the time between their first meeting and their last day in the lab for it to be just two months. It had to be close to six months, he estimated, but he wasn't sure.

“And how did you meet? Henrik said he does not know.”

“Does not know or does not remember?” Damon shot back in a polite tone, though he knew his smile had too many teeth for it to be seen as sincere. “There seems to be a difference.”

Rebekah and Klaus both snorted into their cup, amusing themselves at their brother’s expense, but Damon could only notice Elijah as the man chuckled against the back of his hand, looking more handsome than ever as his face was only lightened by the fireplace. “Is this your way of deflecting?”

“Kol, did you try the potatoes?” Klaus pointed at his brother’s plate and Damon was surprised by the quick glance he received from the blond. Was Klaus *helping* him? *Why* ?

“Yes, Kol, I do believe you should try the potatoes. You wouldn’t need help eating them, would you?” Elijah asked, and the dark look on his eyes made a shiver run through Damon’s spine. He shifted on his seat, grabbing his second cup, the one filled with water, next to his plate and drinking it. *Fuck* .

There was silence for a moment, and he forced himself to focus entirely on Henrik and the senseless choices he was making on his combinations of food.

“So Henrik was around what, three years old when you adopted him?” Rebekah’s voice broke the quietness, batting Henrik’s away without even looking when the boy tried to steal one of her quaid’s eggs and the boy grinned, the mischief on his face letting Damon know he would try it again later.

“Yes, around that.”

“I remember him at that age,” She said wistfully, looking into the distance. “I’m almost ten years older, did you know that?” Damon nodded his head, Henrik had told him about all of their ages. “He was adorable, kept trying to follow us everywhere with those little chubby legs of his.” Elijah, Klaus and Kol hummed in agreement.

“ *He* is *right here.”* Henrik complained.

“And the lack of balance.” Damon added, remembering Henrik’s little walk. There was just something about the lack of coordination of toddlers and their unbalanced walk, as if they would fall at any second if a breeze blew at them. Even as a child Damon already loved to watch Stefan toddle over to him.

Rebekah's eyes brightened. "Yes! The baby walk!" She cooed. "I wish I had seen him then."

"Ah, I have pictures!" Damon added, uncertain of whether or not she would like to see it, and reached for his phone.

It was a sequence of actions, then.

Rebekah beamed.

Kol perked up.

Henrik covered his face with his hands, whining a muffled *'oh, no'* .

Elijah leaned closer to him as he pulled out his phone, though Damon had already shown him some of the pictures. He inclined the phone slightly to show the original they were the same pictures he'd shown him and Elijah nodded in understanding with a close lipped smile.

And Klaus looked so offended while Damon leaned over the table and passed his phone - the gallery already opened - to Rebekah that he almost burst out laughing. "How is it that *I* didn't know about those pictures?"

"You didn't ask." Damon shrugged.

"Rebekah didn't ask either."

"It just so happens that I like Rebekah." He teased, grinning at the put out expression on the hybrid's face and Rebekah's proud one.

"Oh, I see how it is." His whole act of pretending to be upset dropped the second Rebekah squealed.

"Oh, look!" She seemed to completely forget about being angry at Klaus as she turned the phone in hir direction and showed both Kol and him the display. "It's H as a sailor!"

Henrik flushed a bit, rolling his eyes. "I hate that one."

"Look at those cheeks." Klaus laughed, peeking up at his brother through his eyelashes.

"He still has them." Kol teased.

"Shut up." Henrik glowered, but the tiny smile that appeared on his face made him lose his angry pose. His kid turned to him. "Do you

have to do this all the time?"

"Yes." Damon winked.

Henrik grumbled something inhumane in response, or maybe Damon was the one who was having difficulties with his hearing because at that moment Elijah's lips almost brushed against his ear when he whispered. "It seems to me like you've won over Rebekah."

Damon did his best to remain still and not say out loud something insane, like expressing why Elijah shouldn't whisper to him like that because downsouth something he hadn't felt in decades had just stirred into life.

He shifted on his seat, trying his best to appear unaffected when his entire body felt like burning up because of a simple phrase whispered in his ear.

"Alright there, mate?" Kol asked lowly, and Damon looked up in dread. The asshole was smiling at him knowingly.

Damon vowed right then to give Klaus his utmost support should he wish to dagger Kol again.

"Just peachy." He said through gritted teeth.

"Here, try the beef tagliata." Elijah captured his attention again, putting a clean cut of medium-rare steak on his plate and cutting it in half.

The cacophony of sounds coming from the other four stopped as all of them stopped to stare Damon eyed them, confused by the shameless stare.at both Elijah and he with matched looks on their faces.

And here I was thinking Stefan and I were strange , he thought, ignoring their looks and taking a bite of the beef, chewing on it under Elijah's unblinking stare.

The taste exploded in his mouth. Rarely he ate a steak so goo.The taste exploded in his mouth and reminded him of his childhood in Italy. Damon hummed in appreciation.

"Well?"

"It's good."

"I've seasoned it myself."

Elijah asked, his eyes as intense as always.

“It’s perfect, my compliments to the chef.” He joked.

The original turned back to his food, a side smile on his face. “Thank you.”

It took him longer than it should have for him to understand why Elijah had thanked him.

“I think they like you.” Henrik broke the silence after a couple of minutes of driving. “Even Kol.”

Damon eyed him incredulously before turning his attention back to the road. “ *Right* .”

The important thing was that Henrik had fun.

They left the Mikaelsons’ Mansion past eleven p.m after a lot of small talk, and even deep ones - Kol thankfully stopped with all the questions - and Elijah accompanied both Henrik and him to the car after asking if they did not wish to stay.

Damon declined, knowing Stefan would be insufferable to deal with tomorrow should he not return home that night and he was right because the lights of the pension were still turned on when they arrived.

Henrik had been yawning during the entire trip back home and spending the entire day playing baseball must have really tired him because he didn’t even complain about having to go to sleep when Damon sent him to bed with a goodnight kiss on the crown of his head.

He headed to the kitchen right after, taking off the kettle from the cabinet to make some tea for him and Henrik should the kid still be awake after he’d finished.

“ *Well* ?”

Stefan didn’t even wait for him to start preparing his tea before he too was entering the kitchen.

Damon’s nose wrinkled slightly in annoyance and he tried to push the

feeling away. He shouldn't be feeling abandoned, of all things, just because his little brother left him alone to deal with a couple of people he didn't know - Damon wasn't a child.

He still felt salty, though. If Stefan wanted information on the Originals he should have gone to the damn dinner with him.

"'Well' what, brother?" Damon asked, unable to stop himself from letting the pettiness blend into his voice.

Stefan ignored his tone completely. "How was it?"

"Surprisingly nice." If one ignored the bad start. He started filling the kettle with water. "Do you want some?"

Stefan shook his head in denial, waiting for something Damon didn't know. After a couple of seconds staring, he shrugged at his brother's pinched expression. Damon was too tired to play the 'read my mind' game Stefan wanted, if he had something to ask he better speak up.

He turned on the stove, putting the kettle above the fire and sat at the counter.

"Damon." Stefan sighed as if *Damon* was the annoying one. "When are they leaving?"

Damon frowned, turning his head slightly so he could see Stefan. "Leaving?"

His brother rounded the corner, stopping in front of him on the other side of the countertop. "Leaving town. They can't stay here."

Why not? He wondered, then decided it was best not to ask – sometimes Stefan took forever to explain simple things and Damon had a bed calling for his name, thank you very much.

"This topic of conversation didn't come up."

If anything that seemed to upset Stefan. "You didn't ask?" His brother asked, sounding disappointed of all things.

Once again, Damon was filled with annoyance. First Stefan didn't want to come, now he's expecting Damon to know what he wanted to ask. As if he were a puppet.

He was so tired.

He rubbed his face, giving up on pretending to know what his brother was talking about now. “Why would I ask that, Stefan?”

“Damon, they can’t stay here!”

“Why not?”

“Because of Elena! You know Bonnie said Klaus can’t know she’s alive, she was supposed to die in the sacrifice, she fears something went wrong because of that.”

Oh.

Fuck, Elena. Right.

He nodded dumbly, he’d completely forgotten about Elena.

Bonnie had been having dreams of Elena, Klaus and a coffin and she told them those dreams always were meant as a warning, but that had been days ago, it slipped his mind.

Damon thought of their interactions into the night, nothing the Mikaelsons did gave him the idea they were planning to leave Mystic Falls, Elijah had just bought them a house, for goodness’ sake.

“Shit, Stef. I’m sorry.” He placated, feeling guilty. “I don’t know, they didn’t seem too eager to leave.”

“Can’t you ask them?”

Damon snorted in disbelief. “Stefan, I’m not that close to them, I can’t just pretty please ask them to leave town!” He got up to turn the stove off and grabbed the kettle, serving himself some tea.

“If you asked Elijah he could convince them.” His brother leaned over the countertop, and what was up with him thinking anything Damon did mattered to the original? At best Elijah considered him a friend.

He must have made some sort of face at that, because Stefan soon insisted. “He would, Damon. He *likes* you, if you asked him-”

“He doesn’t *like* me,” Damon scoffed at the nonsense, decidedly ignoring the bitter feeling on his chest that told him he would love it if that were the case. “Did all those decades of animal blood diet drive you mad?”

“You’re the mad one if you don’t recognize he likes you.”

“You’re insane, old age has caught up to you earlier than I thought.”

Stefan took his cup away when he tried to grab it. “Just ask him, please.”

I don’t want to, Damon thought mournfully. He liked Elijah, felt good around him in a way he hadn’t in decades and even though Damon would never confess to liking the original, he still wanted to be around him . *If he asked, maybe Elijah would think Damon* wanted *him to leave, and that was the last thing he needed.*

It was ridiculous, but he liked the emotions that came with being in love. Liked the butterflies on his stomach, and the nervousness that made him sweat every time he came closer to Elijah. He liked it, it made him feel like everything was right and nothing could ever go wrong, like the nightmares that plagued him wouldn’t return every night, or that he wouldn’t ever drink blood to the point of feeling sick again as he tried to come down from a panic attack.

And he was satisfied with that, he hid his feelings well and pretended not to love it when Elijah seeked him out to talk. If he confessed, things wouldn’t be the same again. Elijah would probably be uncomfortable – he would never avoid Damon, of course, he was too polite for that – but Damon dreaded seeing those easy, open smiles become guarded.

And then there was Henrik. He was just connecting with his siblings again, if the Mikaelsons left, Damon wouldn’t be able to stay with Stefan in Mystic Falls knowing his son wanted to follow them.

He told Stefan so.

A mistake that he blamed on being exhausted.

“If I ask and for some reason Elijah did convince his siblings, Hal would probably wish to follow them.” Damon said, remembering how happy Henrik had been after the initial bump with Kol. He smiled at the thought. “They’re really good with him.”

“Right,” Stefan nodded, leaning away. “Well, you better start packing, then.” He said, jokingly.

Damon’s smile died.

“What?”

“You’ll be leaving with H, I know.” His brother continued carelessly, as if he wasn’t sending Damon away after a half a century away from each other. Damon had searched for him for almost a decade. As soon as he managed to get away from Augustine he had started looking for Stefan, hoping his brother was still alive.

But none of that mattered, Stefan would never know about any of that and even if he did he probably wouldn’t care.

Because the idea of Damon not asking the Mikaelsons to leave wasn’t even an option to him.

Right .

“Yes.” He forced out, aiming for lighthearted, but his voice gave his hurt away – to his horror – and Stefan turned to face him, his forehead creasing in concern.

His brother came back from the door, approaching him.

“Damon- you know I don’t mean it like that, I was really worried about you during all those years, and it’s been nice to reconnect, it’s just that Elena-”

Elena would be in danger.

“It’s okay, Stefan. I understand.” He said, because he did. They weren’t children anymore, they both had their lives outside of brotherhood and Elena’s life was more important than them being close when they could live together again in a few decades. “I’ll go to bed, now. It’s been a long day.” He stretched out the long for good measure, leaving the cup on the dishwasher.

“Damon, no, wait.” His brother grabbed his arm, stopping him from leaving. “I really didn’t mean-” Stefan cut himself off, his face scrunching up as it always did when he thought over something too hard and at last he sighed, pulling Damon into a hug. “Listen, you don’t have to- I don’t want you to leave.”

Damon closed his eyes tightly, gripping the fabric of his brother’s shirt.

“We’ll find another way.” Stefan continued. “I’ll fix it.”

It sounded like a vow, there was an edge to Stefan’s voice that Damon didn’t like.

He pulled back to study his brother's face, not knowing what to expect, but Stefan smiling was not it.

"What are you-"

"I'll head to bed, see you at breakfast." Stefan tapped him on the shoulder and walked out, leaving him alone in the kitchen, confused at his brother's mood swings.

Chapter End Notes

Kol is fcking annoying but he has his reasons lol are they petty? Yes, but he has them.

I actually searched for Vikings' courtship rituals, but they didn't have any because the marriages were usually arranged, so I'm taking creative liberties here and adding an (untrue) fact that Vikings cook to their love interest as a way of courting.

Warnings: I'm not sure if next week will have an upload because I have exams coming up and I have the personification of the devil as my professor for civil law (that man is a monster and he knows it) and I will be DAMNED if I give him an excuse to fail me since I already butted heads with him twice lmao and I feel like he absolutely hates me hahaha *nervous laughter* my temper has finally caught to me 😓😓

Also, Henrik's POV took onger to come up because something mentioned here will be connected to it.

Chapter 10: Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

> I am sooooo sorry for the delay lmao
> I was facing some writer's block at the time, so I tried to write in my mother's tongue to fix it and it worked, but I ended up procrastinating the translation lol sorry
> Anyways, this chapter is about Henrik. It starts on the night Klaus found out he was alive and during the second part we see his thoughts after the dinner with the Mikaelsons. There's a few important information here about the course of the story, so whoever figures it out gets a cookie!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Caroline lived in a house that reminded Henrik very much of the ones his dad and he used to stay at in New Jersey, where they returned at least once a year so Henrik could meet the friends he made in that state. It was cozy in a way his dad's Pension and his siblings' mansion was not and Henrik felt really comfortable there, especially with Care by his side.

He made himself comfortable on the sofa, bending his legs to the side of his body while he tried his best not to act awkward close to one of the most beautiful girls he'd ever seen in his life.

"Do you want more popcorn?" Caroline asked sweetly, leaning towards him while she extended the popcorn bucket that was in her hands, shaking it a little.

Henrik blushed at her proximity, not knowing if he should look at her left eye, or her right. "Thanks." He smiled, taking a handful of the popcorn and she smiled back, returning to her original position at the other side of the couch, her attention going back to the movie that was playing on the TV.

They were watching Matrix 2, the sequel to his favorite movie and he knew Caroline also liked it because she insisted on picking the first one when she organized an outdoor movie night a couple weeks ago.

She was amazing like that, and liked the same things as him, was friends with everyone and made Jeremy eat dust when she faced him on Mario Kart once, something that only his dad had been able to do

out of everyone they knew.

Henrik knew she didn't think of him that way, and that she never would. Not only did she have a boyfriend, but she was also 5 years older than him, but it wasn't like he wanted to date her - to tell the truth Henrik didn't want to date anyone because kisses were disgusting - but the idea of spending an entire afternoon binge-watching the Matrix franchise with her was the best thing that could happen to him at the moment.

If it weren't for the fact that he knew something was wrong. His dad, his uncle Stefan, Ric, Caroline - everyone was trying to keep him out of something that either already happened or was set to happen.

He knew it from the moment his dad hugged him, right before Henrik entered the car with his uncle so Stefan would give him a ride to Caroline's house. There was something different in the way his dad's fingers were slightly shaking, in how he hugged him tighter and longer than usual, and in the way his smile was tired and strained, just like the ones he offered after Henrik woke him up from one of his nightmares.

Henrik asked if everything was okay, of course, but his dad only said that he wished Henrik had lots of fun and for him to stop being a mother hen, which he now realized was a tactic to make him stop with his questions.

The car ride then had also been quiet, tense, and it's true his uncle wasn't normally the most relaxed, chill person he knew, but uncle Stefan was squeezing the steering wheel with so much strength Henrik could see his veins bulging.

So of course it was obvious they wanted to keep him away from the Pension, or from them, and at the time Henrik thought they were about to meet with someone dangerous near the house, but as time passed his mind started to get filled with negative thoughts that told him several other things that could be happening.

Yes, they were trying to distract him. It worked for a couple of hours, but it wasn't working anymore.

He looked down on his cellphone, turning the screen on as he waited for a notification warning him of his dad sending a message.

The texts he sent his dad weren't being answered and he was already missing him and feeling a pressure on the back of his eyes as if he

were about to cry.

He tried to call on the interval between the first and second movie, but his dad didn't pick up and Care told him he was probably simply tired from all the running from yesterday, when he had to save her and her boyfriend from an evil warlock and then Elena from the bad guy that took her, but Henrik *knew* his dad. Damon didn't sleep much during the night and he *never* slept during the day.

His dad also never, *ever* missed one of his calls.

He could already recognize the signs his body was sending him, it wasn't the first nor twelfth time that happened; he was growing anxious. He was tapping his feet so hard the couch was moving and the movie that usually left him so hooked that he repeated the characters lines under his breath couldn't even hold his attention. The popcorn that just half a movie ago smelled so good now tasted like old food. At each minute that passed his eyes searched for the rounded clock above the TV, every movement of its clock-hand making him even more nervous.

Should he ask Caroline what was happening? Would she lie to him?

She probably would.

If he made the right questions, formulating them in such a way the answers would have to be yes or no, would he be able to tell the difference between her truths and her lies?

The sound of the kitchen's telephone ripped him out of his thoughts and Caroline startled, almost jumping out of the sofa as she left the living room. "It's probably my mom." She said, excusing herself. "Keep the movie rolling, I'll be right back."

"Okay." He smiled, trying not to demonstrate how tense he was at that moment."

The moment she disappeared behind the kitchen's wall, he tiptoed there, stopping near enough to hear what she was saying.

"How's he, though? How far are the symptoms from the bite already?"

Henrik felt as if his veins had turned into ice, his heart jumping a few beats while nausea took over his body.

He stepped away from the wall almost robotically, his mind going a

mile per minute while he returned to the living room. “Caroline, I’m going to the bathroom!” He shouted, managing to make his voice come out steady, not a hint of the hysteria he felt in the words he spoke, and ran inside the bathroom, closing the door and turning the lock.

It can’t be. It can’t be. It can’t be him, he repeated mentally, sitting over the toilet lit and crossing his legs.

He’s fine, it’s just a misunderstanding.

Henrik closed his eyes, keeping a sob inside while his eyes filled with tears from behind his eyelids. Rapidly, almost running over a few words from the enchantment of the projection spell, Henrik started to murmur, trying his best to concentrate.

Apart from Caroline, there were only three other vampires in town. Elijah was immortal and his uncle Stefan appeared to be perfectly well, at least physically, during the time they spent together in the car.

Henrik saw himself in the same cell he’d pulled out the dagger from his big brother’s chest, back in the Pension, and his worst fears became a reality when he saw his dad’s unconscious body above a twin size mattress on the corner opposite to him. Ric, sitting in a small stool beside the bed, was wiping the sweat that dripped through Damon’s face with a face towel.

Henrik almost fell on his knees, stumbling towards his dad’s side, already in tears. “No!” He sobbed, trying to touch Damon’s cheek, but his hand went straight through him. “No!” He cried again, hoping, wishing for the image before him to change, but it didn’t. “Damnit! Dad, no!”

He looked over Damon’s body, searching for a sign that something else was ailing him and not a deadly werewolf bite, but he couldn’t keep himself in denial anymore when he saw the mangle skin of his dad’s forearm.

Damon began to cough, his body shaking so much it convulsed away from the mattress and Ric held him down, saying a few words Henrik couldn’t even make himself comprehend in a comforting tone.

That wouldn’t be happening, he thought, distraught. No, it can’t, it can’t, it… he wouldn’t let his dad die, there had to be a way, a spell he could find.

He ripped himself away from the projection, feeling his cheeks wet with tears, but the despair had given way to determination.

He was a Mikaelson warlock, the sole survivor of a long line of powerful magical beings.

Henrik wiped the tears away from his face with the fabric of his sweater. He would find a way of saving him, he would not lose his father. The witches and warlocks would help him, even if Henrik had to force them to.

He pulled the bathroom's door open harshly, ready to march to the front door and find a way of getting himself home, but found himself facing Caroline's guilt stricken face.

"Henrik," She started, but he didn't have time for conversations.

He scowled. "No."

He tried to make his way past her, but she put herself in front of him. "H, wait!"

"My dad is dying!" He shouted rawly, and grew even more enraged when he felt himself start to tear up again. Crap! "I'm going home!"

"Damon is not going to die!" Caroline denied, stepping in front of him once again, but it wasn't the denial that came from someone who was only trying to comfort a nervous person; there was certainty to her voice. "Stefan found a cure, he's going to take it to Damon in no time, but Damon isn't himself right now, he's hallucinating. It's too dangerous for you to be near him now."

Henrik blinked, brushing away a tear that had gotten stuck on his eyelashes. Then, when the words made sense in his head, he sighed in relief. His dad would be fine, his uncle found a cure.

Now he only needed to be there for him while his uncle didn't arrive. His dad needed him.

"I can defend myself." He took a step back, and when she tried to block him again he lifted both his hands, casting a spell Bonnie taught him. An invisible barrier formed itself on the hallway, separating them both, and Caroline touched it with the palm of her hands.

"Henrik, wait! It's darkening outside already, it's too dangerous to go back to the Pension alone!"

He ignored her calls, leaving her house hurriedly. He didn't want to use a lot of magic while casting the barrier - he could need it later - so Caroline would only be trapped there for about ten to twenty minutes.

He needed to get to the center before that.

Caroline didn't live far away from the town's center, in truth her house stood just a few blocks away. Henrik followed the sidewalk, passing by houses and different types of cars, all his senses on high alert and every movement made him nervous, ready to either attack or defend himself and run.

Caroline had been right, it was already growing dark and by the time he arrived at the Grill, it was night already. He looked around, seeing a bunch of teenagers spread throughout the street, some entering the bar while others talked right outside, by the sidewalk.

The town square, on the other hand, was completely empty, the street lamps that lit up the park flickered, giving a somber look to a place that during the day was his favorite spot to meet and hang around with his friends.

Henrik entered the Grill, ignoring the weirded out looks he was receiving, and went straight to the counter, using the stoll to make himself taller so he could see better while he searched out for Matt Donovan, one of Elena's and Jeremy's best friends, but he didn't find him. Who he found, however, was Sheriff Forbes, who looked at him suspiciously and pulled her walkie talkie out from her belt, taking it to her mouth while not taking her eyes away from him.

Henrik looked around, seeing a deputy walk across the bar in his direction.

He didn't even think twice, he ran, or walked real fast, really.

He ran in zigzag, purshing his way between the people in the Grill, excusing himself while he went as far as he could to the exit without gathering the attention from the others to himself.

"Kid! Hey, kid!"

Henrik didn't even look back, his breath quickening, and as soon as he opened the door he began running at full speed, barely glancing at both sides of the street as he crossed it in the direction of the square.

He could hear the deputy shouting at him, asking him to stop while he

ran after him, but Henrik neither listened nor turned to see how close or far he was. One of the lessons he dad had repeated to him the most was that the moment he looked back, not only would he lose a bit of his speed, but he would also lose the advantage - someone else could show up in front of him and block his way, or he could trip, or grow more nervous than necessary and lose his line of thought.

“I just wanna help!” The man called out. “I’m not going to hurt you, we just want to talk.”

Henrik sneered, hiding behind one of the parked car’s side, crawling from one to another. Just want to talk, yeah. Is that why they’re running after him like creeps? He wasn’t stupid.

“Henrik, I do not know what Damon Salvatore is doing with you, but you’re in danger. We can help.” The Sheriff’s voice resonated in the empty street, making the hairs of his neck stand. Henrik spied through the glass window of the car in front of him, seeing her a few feet away with the deputy, waving her finger in circles as she signaled to him to go ahead and then round another car, so as to effectively block his way.

Henrik looked to his left, seeing that if the deputy really rounded one of the other parked cars ahead, even if Henrik ran he would be in the open. He also wouldn’t be able to run in the other direction, since the sheriff was walking there and would surely block him.

She had to know about his father, knew he was a vampire and she either thought he was one as well or wanted to keep him away from Damon. Both options sucked, in his opinion.

But he was circled from both sides and he surely wouldn’t manage to climb the car in front of him without getting caught.

But he could escape from the back.

He grinned at the thought and turned back, letting out a short explanation of surprise when he saw the metal door that gave way to Ric’s building behind him. Without thinking twice, Henrik ran to the door, opening it as silently as he could before rushing in and running upstairs hurriedly. From there, he would take the key Ric hid above the door frame and hide inside until the sheriff and the deputy left.

But when he reached Ric’s floor, his door was half open, which didn’t make any sense to him because Ric couldn't be there and in the Pension at the same time and Henrik had seen him with his dad

around fifteen minutes ago.

The Pension stood almost half an hour away from town, there was no way Ric got there that fast.

Could it be a thief? A home intruderr?

“You do everything I say and I save your brother. That’s the deal.”

Henrik frowned. He knew that voice, it was all wrong, the accent and the intonation different, but he knew it. He spied the interior of the loft, looking through the door crack.

He felt iced all over, nausea taking over him again.

His uncle was there, his mouth and chin already dirty with blood and he was staring a blood bag that was being extended in his direction as if it were a really tasty lasagna.

Henrik knew uncle Stefan didn’t drink human blood - it made him dangerous, made him act like one of the addicted people from rehab advertisements he saw on the internet.

You do everything I say and I save your brother

Who was that stranger? Why was he forcing his uncle to feed - did he know how much that harmed him? Caroline told him his uncle was going to get the cure, did that mean that man was bargaining with him? Why wouldn’t his uncle simply rip the cure away from the stranger?

The unknown man shook the blood bag swiftly, and Henrik got the sense he was provoking his uncle. Uncle Stefan took the bag away from the other man’s hand, bringing it to his mouth and Henrik burst inside the room on automatic, gathering his magic around him instinctively.

“No! Henrik shouted, lifting his hand. The blood bag splattered against the wall, painting it and the floor with red.

He tripped on something, almost falling on the ground, and looked back in fear, seeing Katherine crouched in front of the wall in front of him and, a few inches away from her feet, what made him trip.

Or better yet, *who.*

Elijah.

“Lijah!” He threw himself against his brother, his eyes glued on the ashened face. “No, no, no!” Henrik pulled his brother’s body against his in despair, before remembering Elijah could not die, not like the other vampires. He scanned Elijah’s neck and chest, seeing the handle of a dagger he would recognize anywhere - it looked as if it were the same one Henrik pulled away from his torso many nights ago. He wrapped his hands around the dagger that pierced his brother’s chest.

“No!” That same known voice shouted, furious.

“Henrik! Watch out!” His uncle shouted, and Henrik felt his body shake as if he had just got electrocuted when he heard the sinister sound of bone being broken. He pulled the dagger out with just one hand and turned his body around at the same time, his other hand already extended in front of him as a protection and protect himself he did, throwing the vampire that jumped in his direction behind with a burst of strength.

It was then that he had the chance to see the person that was tormenting his uncle with the promise of saving his father.

The hair was different, shorter and curlier than Henrik remembered, and instead of a shaved face there was now a thin beard and where the usual straight teeth stood long canines shone, dark veins adorning the side of his eyes, but the face was the same. Nik, his favorite older brother, was flying back as if in slow motion, his eyes widening at the same time as Henrik’s before he hit the wall behind him.

The sound of bricks cracking filled the silent room and Henrik stole a quick glance towards the crumpled body of his uncle, the neck twisted in an unnatural way, near the balcony that separated the kitchen from the living room.

He looked towards his brother again, getting up with trembling legs.

Henrik didn’t know what to think, or where to begin. Nik had killed Elijah? It had to be him, if it hadn’t he would have saved Elijah already, right? It couldn’t have been his uncle Stefan because Elijah was much stronger than him.

Nik lifted his head, a groan of pain escaping him, and Henrik winced in sympathy, seeing the cracks in the wall around Nik’s body. It must have hurt. He met his brother’s eyes, an apology on the back of his throat, but he couldn’t make himself say it yet, not until he knew what was happening there.

“Henrik, is that you? It can’t be- how’s that possible?” Nik’s gaze trembled with longing and he took a step forward. Instinctively, Henrik took two steps back, scared. He couldn’t understand what was happening, or maybe he simply didn’t want to face the truth. Nik was there, Elijah was dead and his uncle was unconscious. Nik stopped approaching, a crestfallen look on his face. “You’re afraid of me.”

“You broke his neck.” Henrik forced himself to say, pointing at his uncle’s body without taking his eyes away from his older brother, afraid that the moment he looked away the Nik he knew would disappear and instead be replaced by a monster. “You killed Elijah?” He accused, but the words came out as a question.

Guilt and regret flashed across his brother’s eyes before he looked away. Henrik closed his hands into fists.

No, it couldn’t be.

How could that be? Nik and Elijah were best friends, got along so well they rarely went somewhere without the other.

A thousand years had gone by, but they were still family. Family didn’t attack one another, not in that way.

“You killed Elijah, didn’t you?” Henrik asked again, his voice becoming higher near the end of the sentence, and when his brother once again didn’t answer, he couldn’t deny the truth any longer. “Why?” He asked, his voice trembling.

Nik finally lifted his eyes, meeting Henrik’s in such a hateful look that he barely recognized his brother in the person he had become. “He tried to kill me first!”

That was a lie, Elijah would never…

Everything made sense so abruptly Henrik felt as if he’d been kicked on his chest by Tommy from California all over again, feeling his breath leave his lungs and hurt spread all over.

His legs shook harder, his strength on them leaving him.

Nik was the man who wanted to hurt Elena. Who tried to hurt Caroline and Tyler. The man everyone was trying to kill, who Elijah was trying to kill.

His eyes widened.

It had always been Nik.

“Nik…”

“Henri, I never- I would never hurt you. Not you. You know that.” Nik didn’t take his eyes off him while he approached, and all of Henrik’s five senses and magic told him to believe it. He was never one to not trust his gut.

Nik had always been the brother he admired the most. It didn’t matter how busy he was, Nik always found a way to take away a few minutes to spend with Henrik and he never treated him like a defenseless babe as the others did. Nik was the one he always went to when he had a nightmare, and it was Nik who he first ran to tell when something happened in the village and his siblings had missed it while they hunted or protected the borders around their home.

He was frozen in place while his brother extended a hand towards him. Nik touched his hair, his face, slid his thumb across one of his eyes, forcing him to close it, and Henrik was able to see his brother’s heart breaking in several pieces when Nik pressed his trembling lips into a line, his eyes growing wet.

“How is it possible for you to be here? Alive? How are you-i I don’t understand.” His hands, once soft, almost ghost-like against his skin from how gentle they hovered, grabbed his face with desperation, the grip firm, but painless, while Nik’s eyes flickered through his face, then his neck and gray avenger’s hood he was using. “You were dead, I got you killed.”

Memories of their last night together came to the surface, when Nik stole their mother’s keys, opened the door upstairs and both of them escaped the hidden place they used every full moon. He remembered the both of them barely keeping an euphoric laugh, excited to see the men from the village become wolves.

Henrik remembered as if it had happened yesterday his brother’s desperate face while he hit the wolf with a heavy branch that had fallen from a tree closeby, trying to get it off Henrik, and the tearing pain he felt in his face and chest while the animal’s claws carved into his skin, ripping it off the very same way his sister Rebekah did to the deers his brothers and father brought home in the days the hunt had gone exceedingly well.

“It wasn’t your fault, Nik, it’s okay.” Henrik offered him a weak, shaky smile. Nik shook his head and avoided his eyes again, pressing the

palm of his hand against Henrik's chest, his face twisted in concentration and Henrik let him hear and feel the beating of his head, covering his brother's hand with his own.

"It wasn't your fault, I was the one who fell down the tree for not holding it hard enough. You warned me."

"No. I should've never brought you with me."

"I don't regret going." Henrik admitted. Whatever it may be he lost in his past life, he was happy now. That night, horrible as its end had been, was one of his best memories from that time. He hadn't felt alone for a single second during those few hours he spent with Nik – it was the largest amount of time he'd ever spent with one of his siblings, and the first time he felt like one of them.

The horror, the thrill of coming face to face with the supernatural and the pride he felt in having his big brother's confidence in him were both stronger than the pain he felt in the end. Nik believed he was mature enough to go with him, chose Henrik out of all their siblings to invite for that adventure, trusting him not to tell their father.

And if he hadn't gone, hadn't died that night, he never would have met his dad. As morbid as it was, it all worked out in the end, and now he had two of his big brothers with him again, and was hoping, wishing for the others to come too.

As soon as his brain processed that thought, Henrik remembered.

His dad!

"H–" His brother shook his head, still looking pained.

Henrik didn't have time for this. He needed the cure, now.

"Nik." He gripped his brother's hand. "I need your help. You have the cure to the werewolf's bite, don't you?"

Nik was about to answer when a figure passed by his side and the pressure of his brother's hands on his chest and face disappeared.

When Henrik's mind caught up to what was happening, Elijah was already pushing their brother against the wall and sticking a stake into his chest.

Henrik knew he wasn't supposed to have any memories of the lab – children usually didn't hold many memories of their childhood before the first seven years of their lives.

But Henrik remembered. No a lot, of course – at least not before the dreams started – but flashes, fragments of his life there, almost like sensations. And when his dreams started, he knew none of those glimpses were invented, they were his memories.

He remembered the room he used to stay in, completely white, sinister in its hospital aesthetics, but he had lots of books there, and some toys too. Yet, everytime he thought of that room, a feeling of immense solitude, almost painful in its massiveness, washed over him and Henrik continuously pushed the image away from his head, distracting himself with whatever was in front of him in those moments.

He also remembered a man, a doctor that took care of him, but he couldn't record his face. In all honesty, Henrik's only real memory of the man was the one where a girl years older than him appeared, her hair long and brown, the same color as his. She had a rainbow haired doll with her, Henrik remembered vividly of it, and of the envy he felt of that girl, of how the doctor caressed her hair, smiling down at her when the girl called him daddy.

His last memory without Damon was of when a red haired woman sat with him in a dark, black room and tried to make him recite difficult and strange words he now knew as the chantings of the spells. Henrik remembered his confusion at seeing the candles lighting up and flickering, and he also remembered the strange symbol drawn in her notepad, one that he now recognized as the word 'lineage' in Old Norse.

All his other memories were happy because his dad was in them.

Henrik didn't remember how they met, he only remembered that after a while, Damon was with him on almost every second of his days, and Henrik wasn't alone anymore. Would never be alone anymore.

The day he escaped was his favorite memory of that year. There was a gap in his knowledge of the hows, and it took him a while to comprehend what was happening when all he remembered were the glimpses he saw from between his fingers while Damon repeated non-stop that he couldn't look; it would ruin the hide-and-seek game they

were playing.

His body bouncing up and down at every movement Damon did, one of his hands gripping tightly on the back of his dad's t-shirt. Flashes of men wearing white jackets splashed with blood and his dad's voice on his ear slowly counting, sometimes breathlessly, till twenty.

And at last, when the bouncing finally stopped and Damon told him he could open his eyes, the world changed.

The darkness and cold of the subsole were exchanged by the warmth and the sun's intense sun. How awed he'd been by the ball of fire in the sky his dad called sun, and the sky, miles and miles of blue everywhere he looked. Even with all the places he visited, and all of the countries, that was the view Henrik found most beautiful.

There were so many colors, so many of them. The lab was always black or white, but the world outside was filled with so many colors he would never find the name for all of them.

That day, Henrik discovered many things he'd never experienced before; how the landscapes changed quickly while he was sitting in the passenger seat, the way the world darkened if the sunglasses he got from his dad covered his eyes, how Damon sounded while he sang, and what genre of music he preferred.

That was his favorite dream-memory because it marked the beginning of their lives together in a world that would never be dual-colored or quiet ever again. All thanks to his dad.

They never stopped changing places while Henrik grew up, never staying for longer than two weeks in the same city or town, and never staying longer than a month in a state.

Henrik was homeschooled– according to Damon, he caused a scandal the day his dad tried to leave him in kindergarten, squirming and screaming until his father brought him into his arms again. Henrik didn't remember any of that, but by the way he grew anxious if he stayed too long away from Damon, he knew it was true. He didn't regret not going to school, not for a second. His dad knew everything about everything, and what he didn't know, well… They had the internet and the libraries.

But even if Henrik had everything he wanted, sometimes he felt a pain in his chest, almost like a longing, a missing piece on the puzzle of his heart.

That pain never lasted for long, especially when his dad was around, or one of his friends. Henrik made a lot of friends during all of those years – he never had any issues in making friends, or keeping them.

It was something he worried about when it came to his dad. Damon didn't have friends, he barely spoke to people apart from the absolutely necessary and kept people at arm's-length. Henrik spent like, two months when he was nine trying to find someone to be friends with his dad after he read in a library book that people needed friends, but he didn't find a way of approaching old people and asking them to be friends with his dad without making Damon look like a loser.

So he tried to make his dad approach them, but it didn't work.

Then, almost two years later, they met Lexi in Greece and she was super nice, super cool and seemed to be a great friend of his dad's cause she looked really happy to see him. It was when they found out uncle Stefan, the little brother his dad didn't talk about, was alive and well and living in a little city in Virginia.

They flew to Mystic Falls two days later, and ever since then the dream-memories started, and he found himself unable to tell if he'd relive memories of his past life, or the one he had now.

Some dream-memories were good, like the one from the day Kol slipped in their neighbor's horse shit and fell on his ass, or when Henrik fished his first fish under Lijah's guidance. But after a while his dreams became more frequent, getting to a point where Henrik sometimes found it hard to differentiate the past from the present and where he was between those two spaces of time.

At first he thought his dream-memories were only dreams, or maybe he was just in denial, not wanting to believe he had lived another life, so many centuries ago. Regardless, it was when he dreamed about his last night alive as Henrik Mikaleson, about climbing into a tree and watching the men turn into werewolves under the full moon, that his theory was rebuked. From that moment, after he understood his dreams were actually memories, every time he remembered his siblings it made him sad, confused as to why he was being forced to carry memories of people he would never see again.

His siblings were dead, he remembered thinking.

It was when he started feeling a pull towards the basement – the only place in the Pension he was prohibited from going. He didn't go, not

at first, but as time passed the pull became stronger, and one night he couldn't handle it anymore. He woke up sweating, his entire body shaking, and his legs were aching with the need to come downstairs *right that instant.*

It was the night he met Elijah. And everything began to change.

Not even a week later, Nik was there too, and so were Rebekah and Kol. Their family was almost complete again, and Henrik was feeling like the pieces he was missing had finally found their way back to him.

That's why when he realized Elijah and his dead were liking *liking* each other, he found it perfect. He wasn't stupid, he remembered how the girls from their village used to follow Elijah with their eyes, and how Elijah looked when someone he liked was near him.

Henrik remembered the time Nik and Lijah courted Tatia, the most beautiful girl in their village – another one of the Petrova Doppelgängers.

Elijah was doing the same thing with his dad, and if his brother and Damon got together, Henrik would kill two birds with one stone; not only his family would be united once and for all, but Damon and Elijah would find a boyfriend.

It was that simple.

Caroline called Elena and Stefan soulmates. To Henrik, maybe his dad could be Elijah's soulmate, as disgusting as that sounded.

So he created a plan – one that in his opinion was infallible – and on his first opportunity, put it into action.

Which brought him to where he was now; looking for a book containing the Viking's customs. But he didn't want *any* book, there had to be a chapter with viking's courtships in there.

Henrik knew his dad like the palm of his own hand – his first reaction was always denial and he was stubborn enough to hold on to that phase for years. Stubborn as a mule, was what people called it. He remembered a seven hundred years old Russian vampire that kept 'bumping' into them during their years in Europe. Ever since he was seven Henrik was sure she was a stalker slash in love with his father because she was always super nice with him and kept looking at his dad, but Damon was sure she was a stalker slash murderer that hated

him and wanted him dead.

His dad still denied it to this day, but what if Natalia showed up in Mystic Falls? What would he do if his dad suddenly fell for her?

Henrik didn't have that much time! Even if she didn't follow them there, what if Damon only realized he liked Elijah after Henrik got to college? How was he going to concentrate on his studies and help his dad finally get together with someone?

Old Norse mythology, Ragnarok, Basic Dictionary for Old Norse, Viking's customs and its particularities-"

"The last one!" Henrik whisper-shouted, not even waiting for Jeremy to finish his sentence.

It was really a strike of luck to find Jeremy there in the library, using his free period to finish his biology essay.

Since it was class time, the library was mostly empty. Henrik hated that library; the white walls, the light gray metal shelves and the deafening silence made him uncomfortable.

With Jeremy there, however, he had company. Of all his uncle's friends, Jeremy was one of his favorites – after Caroline and Bonnie, of course – because one night he played Mario Kart with Henrik and it was really cool to unite forces and try to throw his dad's car out of the road. They failed, but it was the closest Henrik ever got to actually win a race.

Most of the books that spoke of the ancient times stood at the top of the shelves, and though Henrik was really tall for his age, he still didn't reach it. But Jeremy did.

Thankfully, because it would have been humiliating to keep jumping up and down to even get to *read* the titles from the top.

Jeremy poked the book's hard cover. "Viking's customs?"

"Yes. That one!"

The older teen got on his tiptoes and pulled the book from the shelf, putting it in Henrik's hands. He opened it, skimming through the books' summary and he grinned when he found what he was looking for.

Courtships and marriage.

“Aren’t you viking?” Jeremy asked, reading the book from over his shoulder. “Why do you need to read about Viking history?”

Henrik closed the book with a thud. “Homework. It’s boring.” He lied.

Jeremy chuckled. “I knew Damon had to be a demanding teacher. Gimme this, I’ll rent it for you.”

Jeremy walked to the library’s counter and Henrik rushed to follow him. Since he didn’t study there, Henrik couldn’t rent books. At first, since he’d got a ride to the school with his uncle, Stefan was the one who would rent the book for him, but since his uncle was in class and Jeremy was offering…

“Jeremy Gilbert.”

“Student I.D?”

Henrik waited behind Jeremy while the librarian registered the book as rented, and when she was done, she gave the book to Jeremy. They waited until they had passed the library’s door for Jeremy to put the thick book in his hands. “Here you go.”

“ Thanks, I'll take good care of it.”

“Alright.” Jeremy said before nodding his chin at something behind Henrik's back.

He turned around to look, seeing his uncle and Elena arriving with their hands laced together, both of them eyeing each other every few seconds.

“Jeremy rented it for you?” His uncle asked as soon as he got close.

“Yes.” Henrik smiled, nodding.

“That’s it? Viking’s history?”

Henrik shrugged. That’s it.

Stefan stared. Henrik stared back. Then, “Alright then, do you want to go home? I got a free period.”

“Yeah, please.”

His uncle gave Elena a kiss, and got his car key out of his pocket, holding it between his index finger and thumb.

“Let’s go.”

Henrik held the book with only one arm and waved at Elena and Jeremy, saying goodbye while he followed his uncle to the parking lot.

“Are you sure you’ll be fine alone?” Stefan asked for the fourth time, pretending to take dust away from the china cabinet, check the whiskey bottles, see if there was enough wood by the fireplace. Stalling and stalling.

Henrik had never seen his uncle do a single house chore around the Pension, and every time he entered the man’s bedroom all he saw was a mess of papers and clothes that made Henrik’s own messy room look tidy.

His dad’s room, on the other hand, was the complete opposite from his uncle’s. It was so clean and organized it looked like a guest room.

“Of course I can, I’m twelve, not five, you know.” Henrik said, almost offended. Honestly.

His uncle still looked indecisive, throwing glances to the door, then back at him.

“That’s not the first time I've been home alone.” Henrik sat down on the couch, putting his bag on the floor. “I’m just gonna do my homework, then watch something on the laptop once I’m done. There’s sandwiches in the fridge, water, internet, If anything happens, I can just call.” He started lifting his fingers as he went, and when it became clear he wasn’t convincing Stefan, he started to list everything he knew how to do in a sarcastic tone. “I can use the bathroom alone, I know how to wash my hands, brush my teeth–”

“Alright.” Uncle Stefan cut him off, rolling his eyes. “I get it, you know how to take care of yourself.” Henrik smiled victoriously, and his uncle grumbled something about him being a mini version of Damon. “If anything happens, you call. And don’t open the door to anyone that’s not Damon or one of your siblings.”

“Yeah, yeah, I got it.” Henrik followed him to the door. Stefan opened the door to his Camaro. Then he turned around, pointing a finger at him.

“Lock the door. Go on, I want to hear the lock turning.”

“Okay!” Henrik rolled his eyes, closing the door and turning the lock.

As if a vampire would enter his house without him giving them permission first.

He went back to the couch and pulled the book on Viking’s history out of his backpack, opening on the page he wanted, leaving it open in the small table beside him – Henrik had already read the first chapter on his way home, wanting to be sure there wasn’t any wrong information on the book.

He took out the book he really wanted out of his bag, then, and got comfortable on the couch to start reading.

He was almost finishing Les Miserables when he heard the lock turn, and he closed the french book, putting it back into his bag and grabbing ‘V iking’s customs’.

“Hey, back already? I thought you would remain at school the whole morning.” His father entered.

They what went on different ways early that morning, Damon alone to a council meeting, and Henrik with his uncle.

“Uncle Stefan had a free period.” He said, throwing a quick glance at his dad before pretending he was so focused on the book he couldn’t even take his attention away from it for long.

Damon sat down by his side, lifting the cushion close to the couch’s arm to pick the book he had the custom to hide there. “Good reading?” He asked, interested, and Henrik lifted his book to hide his smirk.

He murmured in agreement, not taking his eyes away from the same paragraph he’d already read three times and had yet to assimilate. He flipped a page. There, he was pretending really well. “They got everything right.”

His dad looked at him for a moment before opening his own book – Gone with the wind – and starting to read, but Henrik noticed, with

satisfaction, that he didn't stop glancing at the book Henrik was reading.

He pretended to read for a few more minutes, counting till two hundred internally, and when he was done circled his belly with one of his hands. "Woah, I'm so hungry. I'm gonna grab a snack."

Swinging the bait in front of his dad's face, he left the book open on the chapter he wanted Damon to read and stretched his arms above his head, groaning as he walked away.

It was that simple. His dad was the most curious person Henrik ever met. Damon hated not knowing something, especially when the knowledge was right there.

Of course he would read it, Henrik was *sure* .

And after he read, he would have to see the signs.

Henrik was always good at formulating plans, after all. It was one of the many things he learnt with his father.

Chapter End Notes

Trying to write a smart twelve year old is so hard lmao I tried to make him smart, but still childish, I hope it worked.
I hope you guys enjoy this lmao
my favorite part was him saying he wanted to help Damon make friends but that he didn't know how to do it without making Damon look like a loser lmaoooo my cousin said that to my older sister a few months ago, and it killed me. Twelve year olds are scary, rude beings, guys.
Is it parent trapping if one of the people you're trying to parent trap is your brother?
Anyways, next chapter we're back in track with Elijah's pov where he tries to give his siblings a lecture on how to be nice to the guy he likes

Chapter 11: Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

He waited just long enough for Damon and Henrik to leave the mansion's grounds before walking back inside, passing past Rebekah and Klaus and stopping a few feet away from Kol to look down on him in disappointment.

He was fuming. Elijah had explained to all of them just that morning how important Damon had been for them to reunite with Henrik again, how if it hadn't been for him choosing to care and love a child unrelated to him they might have never even known of Henrik. He had *asked* Kol to be welcoming, told him Damon was under his protection and was not to be harmed or bothered.

"Care to explain to me why, after everything I've done for you, you try to scare Damon Salvatore away with your rudeness after I explicitly asked you to do otherwise?"

"Everything you've done for me?" Kol laughs humorlessly, uncrossing his legs and getting up from the dining table, coming towards him until their chests were almost touching. "Because of you, brother, I've spent over a century trapped in a box! Don't think I've forgotten your part in that betrayal!"

"Is that what that whole scene was about? Vengeance for something I've done to keep you alive?" Elijah clenched his jaw, his mind struggling to compute the nonsense he was hearing. "What else was I supposed to do, leave you behind and wait for news of your death?"

"It was my choice!" Kol shouted, pointing at himself. Unreasonable, was what his brother was. Ungrateful. Elijah had never wished to keep him in that coffin for almost a century, his plan had always been to free Kol as soon as they were safe, but after a fight Niklaus ran away with their siblings bodies and later, after another, harsher fight, lied to Elijah about throwing their bodies at sea. He'd told Kol all of it too, as soon as he'd woken up from his century of slumber, so he didn't understand why his brother was still holding that against him. "My own choice to make! Sometimes I rather think it's better to die than remain surrounded by you lot."

He sighed. Kol had always been against the very thought of them remaining together, of *always and forever* , wishing to explore the world on his own instead. Elijah would love nothing more than to let him do just that, at times even wished to send him away himself when Kol was being particularly difficult – such as right now – but he also feared that in his recklessness his younger brother would get hurt, gather the attention of their father and be forever lost to them.

Regardless of all that – and Elijah did feel a bit guilty for the part he played in his brother's imprisonment, even if it wasn't *really* his fault – he wasn't about to let Kol get between what he wanted, to bring an end to a relationship that Elijah had yet to truly set in motion. Kol was not going to be the cause of Damon pulling away from him, Elijah wouldn't allow it. "I will not have you ruin this for the rest of us, Kol."

"Oh, yes, because *I* am the one who ruined things in this family. I'm the one who stabs his siblings on the back," He waved somewhere behind Elijah, towards where he knew Niklaus stood, his face twisted in a snarl. He had acted so civilized, so docile after the brief outburst of anger that succeeded his regain of consciousness yesterday, after Elijah explained what Rebekah and he had missed, and what happened for them to spend so long on those coffins – Elijah should have suspected he was planning on something. "Or the one who helps." Kol's eyes shone with anger, but Elijah was past caring for his childish complaints. Kol had crossed the very thin line between 'antics Elijah turned a blind eye to' and 'the destructive actions that were bound to bring the downfall of their family'. "Besides, what is there to ruin? Your rising relationship with a charlatan?"

It was his turn to square up, his nostrils flaring as he reigned in his rage, forcing it down firmly. If he were to react to Kol's provocations they would get nowhere.

However, he wasn't about to let him call Damon such names.

"Do *not* speak of him this way."

"What are you talking about?" Niklaus asked, shaking himself off of his unusual wallflower attitude.

"Now why would I tell you anything, brother?" Kol bared his teeth at Niklaus.

In a swift movement, Niklaus was holding their younger brother by the throat.

“Niklaus.” He warned. Pushing Kol at the state he was in was not wise. They need to make him see sense, all the while showing him they wouldn't accept his troublesome attitude.

But Niklaus didn’t even look back at him, his complete attention towards Kol. “I asked, ‘what are you talking about?’”

Kol punched Niklaus on the chin and Elijah closed his eyes, pinching the bridge of his nose once the fighting began in its earnest, the violence of the hits growing in a flash.

“Elijah!’ Rebekah cried out for him in a plea for him to intervene once Kol grabbed the damned dagger Elijah had given him as a sign of good faith and he crossed the room in vampire-speed, separating each of his brothers by the shoulders.

“Enough.” He pushed Niklaus back, before turning to Kol when he made to advance again. “I said *enough* .”

Kol bared his teeth in visible fury, and he shrugged Elijah’s hand away from his shoulder, but finally dropped the hand holding the dagger.

“He has yet to say what he was talking about.” Niklaus argued. “Unless you are pathetic enough to pretend to know something to seem more interesting, brother.”

Elijah almost rolled his eyes at the manipulation tactic, one that he knew Kol caught on to, but his vainness stopped him from not taking the bait.

“I don’t have to pretend anything.” Kol lifted his chin. “I’ve met Damon Salvatore in the twentieth century.”

Elijah studied him, watching for signs of any lies, but there was nothing but smuggines on Kol’s face. For all he knew, Kol was telling the truth. “Elaborate, please.”

His brother sat down, self satisfied. “It was back in 1902. I steered away from our house one night and followed what was known as a pleasing carriage.”

“Yes, I’ve heard of those.” Klaus urged him on impatiently. “Revolutionary. Very criticized. Do get to the point.”

“Shut your mouth and I shall.” Kol threw back, and he took a few seconds to continue just for the sake of being irritating. “There were

three human women there, and we spent the entire night enjoying ourselves – that is, until I woke up in an unknown town, hearing rumors of a vampire hunter that fed on demons."

Elijah felt the way the temperature of the room seemed to fall and his eyes widened in understanding as he remembered how confused he'd been back in that year when their father found them so quickly after they had just changed countries to run away from him.

"You lead father to us." He meant to ask, but it came out as a statement. The feeling of fear when the news regarding Mikael coming to their household still haunted him along with the many others, but in the end Mikael took a completely different route two cities below New Orleans and mentions of him disappeared for a bit more than a decade.

"Kol." Rebekah whispered in horror.

Kol at least seemed a bit regretful about it.

"You almost brought death upon us." Niklaus accused, already growing angry again.

"It wasn't my intention!" Kol's eyes flew to one and each of theirs'. "I didn't realize we were going towards him, and I outwit him in the end, sent him north."

"You're a fool." Niklaus scoffed.

"What does any of that have to do with Damon?" He brought them back to the topic. What was done was done, and their father only found them in 1919.

"He was there, obviously. Cohorting with witches and warlocks." Elijah cocked an eyebrow at that. Witches were known to be unwelcoming towards vampires, even during those times of need and it was unheard of for young vampires to have connections to them. "Dared to push me away from the whores I was feeding at and called me a brute."

Rebekah cackled. "You've been holding a grudge because someone told you the truth to your face?"

"No." Kol denied quickly. Perhaps too quickly. Elijah felt his lips twitch against his best wishes at his brother's ridiculousness and he exchanged an amused glance with Rebekah and Niklaus. "That is not

the main reason. He lied to me, said his name was Dracula Pubert-" Niklaus snorted at that and even Elijah couldn't keep himself huffing a short laugh. "Which I later found out was untrue, but at the time had no way of knowing because I had just been undaggered and therefore could not have possibly known about that frankly grotesque book." He scowled at Elijah, but he paid his glare no mind. Kol should've known that the little stunt he pulled with Marcellus would have consequences. "And gave me the wrong directions to New Orleans, sending me further west instead of east."

"What I'm hearing here is that you embarrassed yourself by getting fooled by a young vampire." Niklaus drew out.

And beautifully so, if Elijah may add, still finding it comical that Damon managed to deceive his cunning brother.

"You aren't listening to me." Kol shook his head with an annoyed huff. "He lied to my face, staring at my eyes, and I did not suspect a thing." Kol tapped his fingers on the table in an even beat. "His heartbeat didn't change, there was no sign of lies whatsoever. He's *that* skilled of a liar, so why should we trust him with Henrik?"

Elijah sighed. He had barely gone past that suspicious phase with Niklaus, and now there was Kol to add fuel to that unending fire. Again.

"I've followed his tracks Kol, I wouldn't be that careless when it comes to our family. So did Niklaus." His brother nodded in agreement, though there was a veil of suspicion on his eyes that wasn't there before. "He has been seen with Henrik around the world since 2002."

"And what of before 2002?" Kol asked.

"No one knows of Damon Salvatore between the period of 1950 and 2002." Niklaus' voice let him know just how much he liked that window of time.

"He hugs himself, did you notice?" Rebekah served herself some wine. "I don't think he even realizes it, but whenever he's not being talked to, he sort of hugs himself."

Elijah had noticed, though it hadn't yet made sense on his mind. Damon was a walking contradiction, insecure at times, overconfident at others. What he knew was that the younger vampire had been through hardships, most likely during those years he spent undetected and Elijah would not let any of his siblings force Damon to share what

he was certain would be hurtful memories that had nothing to do with a ploy to bring their undoing.

“So he spends decades unaccounted for and comes back with our brother? After being in the same town as father?” Kol completely ignored their sister’s diverging comment.

“Damon is *not* working for Mikael.” Elijah found it ridiculous to even have to say it out loud. Kol seemed downright scornful, and Niklaus was now back in the same place he began at – a bomb of paranoia waiting to explode.

“I’m with Elijah.” Rebekah said, surprising him. She sent him a little smile. “No one is that good of an actor. He loves Henrik just as much as us, and is loved in return. I like him.”

“I believe after all those years of connaissance your judgment has been proven defective, sister.” Niklaus dragged out.

“I advise you not to act on your suspicions.” Elijah added, the warning directed at both Kol and Niklaus. “I’ll not have either of you doing anything to ruin the only good thing we got after centuries on this Earth. I’ll remind you that Damon Salvatore is under my protection and that Henrik will not forgive you should you ever hurt him.”

He saw by the reaction of his siblings that at least his last phrase got to them. For now.

It was time for him to have a serious conversation with his baby brother. Henrik had the right to know Elijah was courting Damon before he acted any further and it seemed he had less time than he thought. Not that Damon and him being together would protect the other vampire from Elijah's brother's, but it would stop them from using possible feelings of doubt coming from Damon against him.

Besides, perhaps once Elijah put his feelings out in the wild, Damon would trust him enough to tell him what happened during the half century he spent out of the radar and so he could figure out if the perpetrators had been caught, if they'd been punished.

For Elijah did not lack in intelligence; the behaviors Damon displayed were much alike to the PTSD one could find in prisoners of war. He only hoped he was wrong, and Damon's way of acting derived from something else, not only for Damon's sake, but for Henrik's, because Elijah feared his baby brother was involved in it somehow.

Henrik was too tight-lipped about his past, and though Elijah could easily blame it on the fact that Henrik was a toddler at the time, and therefore likely didn't remember anything, there was a knowing glint in Henrik's eyes that told him his brother knew exactly what happened during his first years of life.

Even more frightening was the awareness that whatever this past was, Henrik didn't trust them enough to tell them about it, or maybe dreaded it enough that he did not wish to speak of it.

“Now, we have more pressing matters to worry about at the moment, rather than dive into your trusting issues.” He began, changing subjects while he was still winning. “What shall we do with Finn? He deserves to meet Henrik, and Henrik deserves to meet him.” Niklaus opened his mouth, ready to offer his thoughts, but he was nothing but a bystander in that particular conversation. Elijah stopped him before he even started. “Your opinions will be disregarded on this. Our brother’s fate will be decided by Rebekah, Kol and I, as you can’t be trusted in these matters *and also cannot relate.”* He said dryly.

He ignored as Niklaus dramatically sighed and clasped his hands above the table, leaning his forehead into them, and kept his attention on Kol and Rebekah.

Deciding to undagger Finn took a long discussion that Elijah had already anticipated.

Both Kol and Rebekah, just like him, dreaded and looked forward to it all at the same time. They all loved their brother, there was no denying that, but Finn was a wild card that tended to bring them problems one way or another with that hatred he felt towards himself and towards them.

They considered freeing their brother many times along the passing of the centuries, but the stakes were always too high, especially after the Brotherhood of the Five – having hunters almost succeeding on killing them led them to realize there would always be a threat, a way that nature would find to try and end their existence.

And Finn always seemed to know exactly where to find it.

But now there was finally a reason that changed the balance of things, tipping its scales towards the other side; undaggering him.

Henrik deserved to see their older brother again, and Finn deserved to have a chance to see Henrik again. And Elijah hoped, wished, that Henrik's reborn presence, resurrection or what like, would bring the older brother they once knew back, the Finn that had a will to live and didn't see them as monsters instead of his family.

Elijah watched his brother's ashen face as Finn lay on the floor of the living room, wondering how long it would take for his brother to return to the world of the living. Finn had spent 900 years on that coffin, perhaps it would take him days to regain conscience.

Niklaus stopped by the door frame with a backpack on one of his shoulders. Elijah eyed it.

"Are you leaving?"

"No." His brother denied, hesitating for a second before entering the room and stopping by his side to look down on Finn as well. "The three of you have made a mistake, brother."

"We shall see."

"This emotional attempt at *reconnecting* of yours will fail."

"Perhaps." Elijah met his eyes, seeing his insecurities and fears looking back at him. But he wasn't about to let himself be led by those feelings, as his brother was. Life wasn't worth living if one did not choose to take risks once in a while. "But I would rather give this family a chance instead of hiding behind what ifs."

Niklaus clenched his jaw, his eyes losing their warmth as he built a wall around his emotions again, but Elijah did not regret saying it. Niklaus had to hear the truth, and if one had to tell him, let it be him, his older brother.

"I'll not stand by and watch you ruin this." Niklaus turned his back.

"Don't try anything foolish, Niklaus." Elijah called out, watching his brother leave, knowing there was nothing he could do to stop him.

He would let his brother do as he wished, for now, since he had more important matters at hand.

He sighed, eyeing Finn one last time before walking out of the room, fixing his shirt as he went.

Rebekah was in the adjacent room, drinking directly from the vein of a pizza delivery man and Elijah twisted his mouth in displeasure at the sight. “Do you have to?”

“I was hungry, Lijah.” She whined, pulling off the man’s wrist just long enough to get the words out. “Those blood bags are disgusting.”

He pulled on the knot of his tie, looking at the mess she’d made of the rug. “What if Henrik arrives?”

“I would hear him coming and clean the mess before he saw anything.” She let go of the human’s wrist and the stranger remained by her side, unmoving. “Besides, I’d be more worried about what our brother will say when he realizes you are courting the man he calls father.” She got up, and he looked down as she started helping him with his tie. “That is, if he hasn’t already noticed after that little display of yours at dinner.” She smiled innocently at him, but her eyes shone with mischief and he couldn’t stop himself from smiling back. “Though it will be hard to explain to outsiders. What shall we say? This is our brother's father, he's also our brother-in-law.”

“Must you tease me about it, sister?”

Rebekah brushed her hands against the fabric of his shirt, easing it. “Only if you keep being subtle about it. Your feelings are required, in case you are being obtuse about it.”

“Oh, I know they are.” Elijah buttoned his suit. “I’m afraid *he* doesn’t know.”

“Well, let it be known that I approve, and I’ll take your side against Nik and Kol if need be.” Elijah stared at her, surprised. Rebekah had never approved of any of his lovers before. “What? We owe him a debt that cannot be repaid, and he’s good for you. You’re no longer acting as if you had a stick logged up your arse.”

He looked away, smiling as he understood the meaning behind her crude words. He grabbed her hand, touched. “Thank you, sister.”

Rebekah nodded. “Now get out of here, you’re interrupting my feast.”

Elijah turned away, shaking his head, and left for his car.

He was at the Salvatore’s pension in less than ten minutes, but there were no heartbeats coming from the house when he arrived; no one was home.

He was just about to send Henrik and Damon a message when he heard a car approaching and turned around, seeing his brother and Alaric Saltzman in it, just rounding the corner of the road that cut through the forest around the Pension.

“Lijah?” Henrik shouted, and waited just long enough for the professor to park to get out of the car, stopping in front of him. “How long have you been here? Did you wait a lot?”

“No, I just arrived.” He wrapped an arm around his brother’s shoulders and walked with him back to the human’s car. “Alaric Saltzman.” He greeted.

“Did he text me?” Henrik took off his phone, mumbling to himself as he looked over his phone. “I don’t see any texts.”

The professor lifted a hand as a ‘hello’. “Elijah.” Then the other man turned to Henrik. “You have your keys, buddy?”

“Yep.” Henrik lifted his key by its chain. It was red and golden, and looked like a head – a helmet of sorts. “Thanks for the ride, Ric.”

“Yeah, yeah, anytime.” The human smiled, but dropped it when looked back at him. Elijah maintained a civil expression on his face – the professor was someone Henrik named as Damon's best friend, it wouldn't do to have the man hating him. “I’ve gotta go, now. Text Damon if you’re leaving, okay? I don’t want his worried self filling my phone with calls while I’m in class.”

“Captain, yes, captain!” Henrik saluted, giggling when the professor only shook his head with a sigh and restarted his car.

“Everytime.” He heard the human bemoan as he drove off and turned to Henrik with an arched eyebrow.

“He dressed as Captain America for a costume party at Jenna’s college.” Henrik shrugged, putting his key on the lock and turning it to open the door. “She showed dad and I all the pictures, they looked real nice.”

“Really nice.” He corrected.

“I know, old man.” Henrik grinned. Elijah followed him inside, taking in the empty house. Henrik threw his backpack at the couch and started taking off his shoes.

“Where’s Damon?” He asked casually.

“Doing adult stuff. He left me at the town park to hang out with some friends and went to the grocery store, but then he texted me to go to Ric’s so he could bring me home because ‘something came up’.”

Elijah nodded, following his brother as he went to the kitchen and grabbed himself a sandwich on the fridge. He watched his baby brother serve himself a glass of juice from the fridge and close it with his foot before taking it back to the living room. “I had yet to see Damon leave you alone at home.”

“Dad doesn’t leave a lot. He doesn’t really have friends.” Henrik shrugged, putting his snacks on the center table. “Or didn’t, he gained a lot of friends when we got here- I mean, Ric mostly got close to him without him noticing and all, it was funny how suspicious he was at first.”

Elijah leaned forwards, interested. Yes, he could imagine the scene.

“What about you? How did you meet those friends of yours?”

“Huh, Elena introduced us.” Henrik took a huge bite of his sandwich, munching on it. He covered his hands before continuing. “She babysat them when they were kids.” Elijah wisely refrained from reminding him *he* was a kid. “And you? Do you have friends?”

He arched an eyebrow, pulling on an offended face for his brother's sake and Henrik giggled. “Of course I do, just not in this town. Though perhaps I can consider Carol Lockwood a friend.”

Henrik arched an eyebrow, looking like he would rather believe in the existence of unicorns. He wasn't that keen on teasing Elijah in his past life. “Sure.” He dragged out.

He looked down on Henrik’s socked feet, humming nonchalantly. “I was wondering… Do you still get tickles on your feet?”

Henrik’s eyes widened and he rushed to hide his feet underneath his tights, protecting them and when Elijah leaned closer he scowled, scurrying back on the couch. “I *will* kick you if you get any closer.”

He smirked. There, he still knew how to shut that smart mouth all his younger siblings seemed to have. “That would only make it easier for me to get access to your foot, you do realize that, don’t you?”

“Lijah.” His brother whined, his entire body curled tight as if waiting for an attack. Elijah's smirk only grew and he leaned back, relaxing back against his side of the couch.

Henrik eyed him, still suspicious, and did not put his feet back on the floor again. Instead, he huffed haughtily, a small pout on his lips as he reached out for his half eaten sandwich again.

He waited until his brother had eaten and drunk his juice before bringing up the subject.

“I talked to Kol last night.”

The pleasant ambience they were enjoying changed into something dark and Henrik sat straighter, his eyes gaining an upset look. “He was a jerk to dad.”

“Indeed, but you know how Kol is when it comes to strangers.” He offered, not quite defending his brother, but also not wanting Henrik to be mad at him for something that Elijah had already thoroughly scolded him for. “And it turns out it’s because Damon tricked him over a century ago.”

Henrik’s lips twitched as he tried to keep a smile in, but it was a lost battle from the very beginning and his smile only enlarged by the second. “What did dad do?”

“I don’t quite recall,” Elijah tapped his index fingers against his chin. “I believe it was something about how Damon told him his name was Dracula Pubert and gave him the wrong directions, sending him miles away from where our home was.”

Henrik crackled. “You’re lying!”

Elijah chuckled, shaking his head. “It’s the truth.”

His brother only laughed harder.

“Did Kol deserve it?”

Elijah nodded, looking as solemn as he could as Henrik started wheezing, repeating the ridiculous name Damon had given Kol as if it were his own.

“Listen, Henrik.” He began once his brother came down from the laughter. “I wish to tell you something serious. I would like to start by

saying that in no way it was my intention and that–”

His brother frowned. “What are you talking about?”

“I’ll get there.” Elijah had built a speech just for that. “It was not my intention for it to happen, and it may be difficult for you to understand, but feelings aren't something one can control–”

“Are you going to ask me for my dad's hand? Like, permission to date my dad?” Elijah’s carefully built speech died down on the back of his throat and he blinked, opening his mouth wordlessly. Of course, of course Henrik ought to have noticed already. Elijah thought that due to his brother still being a child when he died he wasn’t yet aware of their customs when it came to courting, but as always, Henrik surprised him with his awareness.

Henrik snorted, shaking his head and continued. “I mean, that’s sort of a weird thing to do nowadays, but you have my support, or whatever. Don’t hurt my dad, though.” Henrik pointed a finger at him with a glare, though his smile broke the threatening effect he was trying to achieve. “That would make things really difficult for me.”

“I will take very good care of him.” Elijah smiled, giving his brother’s thigh a little squeeze. “Thanks, little brother.”

He was still in awe of how easy it had been. Henrik was truly a wonder.

“Good luck with uncle Stefan, though. You'll need it if you’re going to ask him cause man, he does *not* like you. Like, *at all* . He never said anything to me about it ‘cause you're my brother and all, but his face does his thing, you know. “He tensed up his face to exemplify what he was talking about. “When dad or I mention you and it’s not good.”

“I gathered that, yes.” He said dryly.

He had noticed Stefan had taken a special dislike to him after he broke his word of killing Niklaus, but Stefan’s consent to a possible relationship between him and Damon should Damon accept it was of no consequence to him. If anything he thought the relationship between Damon and Stefan was completely off-balance, with Damon giving too much and Stefan taking it for granted while not returning anything at all.

“Don't be gross in front of me, though. I don't want to see my brother and dad kissing.” Henrik scrunched up his nose in disgust and Elijah

sent him a blank look that made Henrik smile, his face softening up and he poked Elijah's knee with his left foot. "I'm glad for you and whatever. You'll be good for each other."

Elijah smiled back, squeezing his brother's foot. "Thank you."

He'd thought that since that night he scented the younger vampire and the idea only solidified in his mind as the days passed. Now all pieces were in the correct place. His baby brother was on board, his courting had worked and Damon was obviously interested – there was nothing stopping Elijah from going fully in.

Damon Salvatore would be his, sooner rather than later.

But as of now, he thought as he slyly turned Henrik's foot upwards so as to facilitate the access to its sole for a well deserved tickling *, for now I will be an older brother.*

Chapter End Notes

\o/
I love writing Elijah with Henrik cause I feel like that's the time he shows the side of him we clearly, but barely, get to see during the flashbacks when he was human lol, so him being close to Henrik, the brother he lost and that was the cause for the entire change in their lives, allows him to let that part of himself flow
Anyways, I told you Kol had his reasons lol he *is* partially mad because Damon tricked him lol, but he also finds it kind of haunting how easily he was tricked, and also, how dare Damon not even remember him? Lmao
Elijah got the green light from Henrik! Yaaaay!
I love Rebekah's stick in your ass line in TO lmao and Elijah's smile after. I love their relationship so much
And also, there Finn is.
What do you think Klaus is planning? □ What is *Kol* planing?
How will Finn react to Henrik and Damon?
Anyways, hope you enjoyed it! Please leave a comment and I see you next week!

Chapter 12: Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

> I actually wrote three different chapters that I changed, deleted, molded into one another, and saved for later lol
> WARNINGS FOR THIS CHAPTER: Mention of torture, and I do go into detail for a bit, and Damon disassociates for a bit. Also, dehumanization
> And just a heads up: Liz apologized for trying to shoot Damon when he was under the symptoms of the bite (though he doesn't even remember her threatening him)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Once Stefan arrived it became too uncomfortable for him to remain at the Salvatore's – which was just as well, for Rebekah had just texted him about Finn's return from his dead state.

They were just entering the Mansion's grounds. His little brother had texted Damon, and gone over the list of things he always had to put on his backpack before leaving. Elijah could tell Stefan wasn't keen on having Henrik leave with him, but he didn't have a choice on the matter.

Henrik was vibrating beside him, the picture of a normal, happy twelve year old, and Elijah vowed once more that no one and nothing would ever take that smile away from his brother's face again.

This time it would be different. *They* would be different.

The second they parked, Henrik tried to leave, but Elijah took a hold of his arm. "Wait."

"What?" Henrik complained, but he didn't make a move to leave the car again.

Elijah sighed. He'd been avoiding that conversation, but he couldn't let Henrik go in without warning him first. He wondered, for the first time, if he'd made the right decision waking up Finn.

The white mansion loomed above him the way a fallen meteor would, but Elijah pushed down his worries forcibly.

No, he wouldn't let doubt and fear control him like they did Niklaus.

He had to believe it was the right choice. It was worth the try. Elijah had spent his entire life refusing to give up on the feelings of hope or let go of the memories of the family they once were and now that he was so close to getting everything he ever wanted, he wasn't going to back down.

Still, he needed to warn Henrik. His brother had the right to make his choices knowing of all the risks.

"Finn can be harsh, sometimes. At times even downright inconsiderate." He said. They were still in the car. The door on Henrik's side was already half opened. "He did not take well to becoming a vampire."

Henrik's brows furrowed, his eyes searching. Elijah didn't allow his true feelings to show to most people, but his brother was in the small category that Elijah let himself be bare for. Whatever it was Henrik found in the mixed emotions Elijah was experiencing now, made Henrik's eyes gain an analytical light to them, and the boy nodded.

"I understand."

"However, he would never hurt you." He felt obliged to say, because in no world Finn would ever hurt Henrik.

"I know." Henrik simply said.

Elijah turned back to the mansion, his fingers tapping the wheel. Once, twice, thrice. He opened the door.

Henrik was out even before him, and how strange it was for him, the older brother, to be the one uncertain, hesitant. There was none of the fears hammering against the back of his head, trying to build a house into his mind and populate it, in Henrik. Henrik's steps held nothing but confidence, his pace steady as he followed the path walk to the entrance door, whereas Elijah's were reminiscent of a death row prisoner walking to his own execution.

Elijah walked beside him, his hand tapping against his thigh.

Rebekah told him Kol had come back from his night out, and left right after with some excuse she didn't bother paying attention. He had been informed by message of Finn's return, but had not answered it, so they didn't know if he'd seen it – or if he even remembered how to see it.

Niklaus had yet to show his face after leaving that morning, which was altogether another upcoming problem.

Henrik opened the heavy door with both hands, and held the door open for him to pass.

There was no one in the hall room, and they crossed it quickly, going after the dining room, to where he could hear fast breathing and a jumping heart.

Rebekah waited by the entrance, her face carefully neutral. It wasn't from her the unsteady vital signs came from.

Henrik's determination didn't waver as he walked down the hallway, and Elijah was forced to follow. He stopped by Rebekah's side, however, having a privileged view on Finn.

His brother's eyes were round as he stared at Henrik. Of all of them, Finn was the only one no one had a real connection with, or intimacy, really. His brother, when they were humans, always kept to himself, a shadow bordering the union that was Elijah, Niklaus, Kol, Rebekah and even Henrik, as young as he'd been.

When they became vampires, the abstract distance between them only grew. They weren't tied together by the unmerciful grips of their father's fists, and Elijah couldn't speak for the others, but he was of the impression they all thought and felt the same thing; there was no real reason to force something that didn't exist and had never existed. Finn was their brother, their family, but he didn't wish to be so.

Elijah did try to approach him for a couple of years, after their transformation, thinking maybe Henrik's death would bring them closer, allow them to support each other, take comfort in one another.

And perhaps Finn did so too, he could never tell. Regardless, it didn't matter, for it never worked, something had always been missing.

Elijah only hoped that, while Henrik's death wasn't able to unite them, and instead just pushed them farther away from each other, perhaps this miracle they were granted after centuries of suffering – their babe brother, alive again – would.

" *Hal* ." Finn's eyes were round, and he remained rooted to his spot while he stared, his eyes darting across Henrik's face and body.

"Finn."

Henrik's feet worked down the three steps that stood between the hallway and the living room and he started running mid-way, his body colliding against Finn's as he wrapped his arms around Finn's waist, his face burrowing into the fresh clothes their brother was wearing.

It was the first time Elijah experienced his brother breaking down. Finn's brow furrowed, his nose scrunching up the same way Niklaus' did when he was upset, and he started crying, the smell of his salt tears burning Elijah's nostrils. Finn pulled Henrik close, his hands clawing on the back of the boy's jacket and Elijah swallowed harshly, his hand trembling slightly as his stomach unraveled in a swirl of opposite emotions

Rebekah took his hand, her own trembling, and Elijah pulled her close, his eyes not leaving the scene in front of him.

Somehow, wishful thinking or not, he had the certainty that no matter what followed, they would be fine.

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"And where's Nik?" Henrik asked.

Now that Kol was back as well, there was only him missing.

"He's avoiding facing me." Finn said lazily, his eyes still not leaving Henrik. It was something Elijah understood well, they all seemed to go through that stage of wonder and awe and not being able to take their eyes away. "The coward."

Henrik remained silent, though he started sulking silently. Elijah supposed even Henrik knew Finn had every right to be angry at Niklaus, and at all of them as well.

"Rebekah has told me of the vampire who took you under his care." Finn continued, and his words weren't idly chosen. He said vampire, instead of Damon, and said 'took you under his care' instead of raised.

He would allow it for now, but if his brother stepped out of the line Elijah would intervene.

"Yes. His name is Damon Salvatore. He adopted me a while back,

though I'm not sure it was legal." Henrik shrugged.

"Does that mean you have his last name?" Rebekah furrowed her brows.

"Yeah, duh." He continued, using that teenager tone that Rebekah loved to use, but had yet to have it used on her. Elijah thoroughly enjoyed her reaction. "It's not like we knew what my last name was, it wasn't included on my record– I mean, we had no way of knowing."

Elijah exchanged a meaningful look with Rebekah. So Damon met Henrik in a government facility? Perhaps a hospital? Why not say so, then?

No, that wasn't it. They wouldn't be so secretive about it if they'd met in an adoption center, for example. There was something else – something Elijah would find out.

"Henrik Salvatore." Rebekah rolled the words on her tongue. "It isn't bad, but it's not better than Henrik Mikaelson."

"Of course you would think that." Elijah shook his head in amusement, though he agreed. A hyphen would fix it.

"Do you disagree?"

"I didn't say that."

"So, the vampire who… helped you. Where is he?" Finn asked again.

Elijah narrowed his eyes at the degrading tone.

"His name is *Damon* . Damon Salvatore, not *vampire* . He has a name." The change was clear as water. One second the boy was smiling at them, and in the other he was glaring daggers at Finn. "So use it. Unless you are going to start calling me human as well."

Finn stared at him, mouth half open in shock. Elijah smirked, cocking an eyebrow at his brother when Finn glanced at him. There, now he too had a taste of the man Henrik was on his way to becoming. He never confronted them back when they were human, too shy or insecure of his place to do so. Now, however, he spoke his mind, uncaring of how they would react or what they would think of him.

"You didn't even meet him, and you already don't like him." Henrik kept going, and Rebekah raised her eyebrows comically while Finn

continued to listen to his ranting in shocked silence. “I saw the disgust in your face, so don’t bother denying it! Kol was also mean to him and I did not like it, *at all* , so you better be nice ‘cause my dad is nice and he’s *trying* , so you have to be nice to him too!”

Kol entered the room, a glass of blood on his hand. He looked like a child whose Christmas came earlier.

An uncomfortable tension took hold of the room from Finn’s part, and Elijah leaned back on his chair, thoroughly enjoying it.

“I… understand.” Finn said slowly, to his surprise. His brother stared at Henrik with new eyes, and there was still incredulity painting his features. “I will refrain from calling him as such.”

Henrik’s cheeks were already growing red from the long speech, and he was still scowling. “And you’ll be nice to him.” He repeated. *Demanded* .

Finn looked around, searched for help that wouldn’t come, at loss for words. Finally, when he was met with nothing but expectant stares – for even Kol didn’t dare to speak badly about Damon in front of their baby brother – he turned back to Henrik, nodding helplessly. “I will.”

Henrik still looked put out, but he stopped actively glaring at Finn. Though he did not start talking again, a sign of him still being upset.

Elijah glanced at Kol, the main reason for Henrik’s outburst. His brother’s lips were pressed against each other in a straight line, and Elijah could see real understanding take place in his eyes.

Henrik’s blow up couldn’t have come at a better moment. If their brother reacted like that to just a hint of dislike towards Damon, there was no telling what he would do if they actively harmed him.

Finally Kol seemed convinced.

The entrance door burst open, hitting the wall with a loud bang.

Elijah was standing at once, putting himself in front of Finn, who pushed Henrik behind him as he focused on his hearing.

Rebekah and Kol took their stands as well, standing at each of Henrik’s sides.

Eliah relaxed minutely when he recognized the crazed steps, and saw

the shift on his siblings stance's when they came to the same conclusion. Not an enemy, then, just an upset, angry Niklaus. Elijah would have preferred for it to be an enemy.

Their brother mustn't see Niklaus in such a state. The way his brother was walking in circles, huffing under his breath like a mad dog.

The shrill nose of porcelain breaking let him know Niklaus had just broken one of his fine Sicilian vases. Elijah grieved the exquisite article.

"Rebekah, take Henrik to the Salvatore's." He ordered.

"What, why?" Henrik asked, his eyes wide. "What's happening? What was that?"

That wasn't the time.

"Rebekah." He repeated, more urgently this time.

She clenched her jaw. "Alright." She grabbed hold of their brother's wrist. "Come, Henrik. We must go now."

"I'll be going with you." Finn said, following after her. Elijah lamented not being able to follow – he wanted the excuse to meet with Damon, wanted to be there and make sure Finn was kept in line.

But dealing with Niklaus was the priority.

He waited for the noise of the car's motor to start, – the one he brought for Rebekah – infinitively glad he'd shown his sister the changes cars faced after the twenties just two days ago.

"Will you be coming?" He faced Kol.

"I think I'd rather sit that one out." Kol shrugged, filling his blood stained glass with whiskey. "Helping our brother fix whatever issues he's facing is not even on my list of things I want to do in this fine century."

Elijah left him there, following the noise towards where Niklaus was throwing his tantrum. The entire entrance was destroyed; there were pieces of fine porcelain on the floor, the curtains were ripped off its handlers. Even the wall hadn't survived Niklaus' angry fit, two identical holes made by his brother's fists stood proudly in the middle of the wallpaper.

He dreaded the calls he would have to make. Elijah hated having to wait on call for the receptionist to pick up.

“Niklaus.” He started, his voice drenched with disappointment.

His brother was standing unmoving on the beginning of the stairs, covered in blood, but it obviously wasn’t his and instead belonged to some many unlucky souls. Now that Elijah saw it, he realized the floor by the door was dirty with red footprints.

The carpet that matched the wallpaper perfectly was destroyed, probably beyond repair. It was the last one in the store.

He turned to Niklaus again, watching as his brother heaved and growled like a bull ready to attack. “What happened?”

“Something went wrong! It’s all your fault!” His brother roared, face already red. Elijah cocked an eyebrow, unimpressed. “You messed up the ritual with your ridiculous attempt to *kill me* !” He shouted the last two words.

Niklaus grabbed the last surviving vase near him and threw it in Elijah’s direction. Elijah caught it with both his hands, turning it around to make sure it hadn't cracked. “I’m no mind reader, brother. I still don't understand what got you in such a distressed state.”

Niklaus sat down on the steps, covering his face. “They all died.”

“Who?”

“The pack of werewolves I found. None of them survived the transformation.”

Elijah suddenly grew interested in the conversation. “You did what? Niklaus, what have you done?”

What was he *thinking* ? Creating hybrids, just like him. Giving werewolves vampire power.

In no world would anyone think that was a good idea, but his brother always enjoyed playing God.

His only reprieve was that Niklaus’ plan had failed. Elijah didn’t know how the vampires would deal with such a threat out in the wild; there would be chaos.

And what of Henrik?

Why help create another branch of powerful beings? Add another number of enemies on their already long list?

His brother jerkly got up. “I need a witch.”

Elijah stepped in front of him, stopping his leave. “What you *need* is to stop with this senseless idea of yours and let this matter go.”

“Get out of my way.”

“Niklaus, this… *project* of yours is a danger to us all. To Henrik.”

Niklaus’ face scrunched up in fury. “I’m doing this *for* him! There will be a loyal army to protect him at all times!”

“An army?” Elijah chuckled darkly. “In what reality would the same people you’ve killed and irrevocably changed be loyal to you?”

“I have my ways of making them obey.” His brother spat. “Do you not realize how many people will be coming after him once they find out what he means to us?”

“You mean to *you* . My enemies and our siblings’ enemies bound together don’t amount to half the sum you’ve made in your years of depravity.”

“And what of it, Elijah?” Niklaus sneered. “How was I supposed to know– I had no way of knowing he would ever be back, that I ever had to care about it.”

“You should’ve cared, if only because you knew the remnants of your actions always fell upon the rest of us.”

His brother’s face closed off, and the tears in his eyes dried. “I will find a way to build my army.”

No, he wouldn’t.

“You won’t. I won’t let you.”

He saw the attack before it came. Predicted it, really.

In a swift movement he was pressing his brother’s arm against his back, pulling it by the elbow upwards. “I’ve warned you, brother. I will not allow your paranoia to get in the way of this family, not anymore.”

Niklaus was stronger than him, but in that position he couldn't do much more than struggle, grunting like a rabid animal. Elijah put his entire weight on the knee that was pressed against the area of Niklaus' lower back.

"I will be watching you." He leaned close to his brother's ear. "Every plan you make, and every new step you take, know that I'll be aware, and if you ever get near to actually achieving this insanity you're so intent on trying, know that I will stop you."

"I'll put you in a coffin and enjoy using your petrified body as a pincushion for my stakes!" Niklaus raged.

"This threat has gotten old."

He got up, getting off his brother, and took out his pocket tissue to clean the werewolves' blood left on his hands from when he grabbed Niklaus' arms.

"I'll be going out." He called out, for Kol's sake more than Niklaus'. "Do try not to kill each other."

The door closed behind him, and he descended the steps to his car. He had a short number of people to warn of the new developments, and he'd use this as an excuse to see Damon, but first he'd alert the mainly affected one.

He was a mile away when he made the call, hearing it ring a couple of times before a hesitant voice picked up.

"Hello?"

"Ms. Gilbert. It's Elijah Mikaelson." He twisted the wheel left on the next turn. "I have unfortunate news."

Damon was not having a good day.

First he found out his brother had drunk and finished his favorite bottle of whiskey and not replaced it, and none of the supermarkets or bars in Mystic Falls had it in store, so Damon would have to wait a week for his order to arrive.

Second, Liz called him to ask for help getting her daughter away from her insane, psychotic husband's claws.

And lastly…

Inhale.

Count to seven.

Hold it.

Count to five.

Exhale.

Count to eight.

Bill Forbes stared at him, his eyes wide with wonder, gleaming, as if he was glad to see him there, alive and better. Damon knew better.

Behind him, Caroline, the man's own daughter, stared at both Damon and her mother in relief, still trapped in the chair she was being tortured in.

Damon may have glanced at her, but all his senses were attuned to Bill Forbes. Or, as he knew of him, Doctor William.

" *Don't let it close yet, halt your healing, control your mind* ."

For a second he was there, lying in an operation table on the lab, doing his best to obey, to control his vampire healing and maintain the "Y" shaped incision open as they wished so he could finally be rewarded with some hours of rest, but it *hurt* , and he was scared and he couldn't breathe for someone's bare hands were cupping his lungs carelessly, lifting them.

"That's it, 21051, you're doing very well. See? It's my perfect specimen."

"Be gentle with its lungs, you're making it nervous."

There was still a small part of him that rebelled at being called an it, but – horrifying and degrading as it was – the biggest shard of his conscience held on to that praise, to those words of pride escaping the doctor's mouth, for it meant Damon was safe for now. Doctor William wouldn't let them hurt him more than he could fix.

In those moments, Damon held on to that small surety on that world

so filled with uncertainty, searching for the man's blue eyes through the blur of his unshed tears.

Doctor William *Forbes* . What a bad joke.

He should've known the man was of the Founder's lineage. The doctor wasn't there the day Damon escaped, and Damon hadn't known his last name, or been very keen on getting revenge when he had so many things to worry about, such as getting used to the new world, finding his brother and raising a child.

He'd also admit, only to himself, that he was afraid if he searched for Doctor William too much he would have broken himself into pieces so small he wouldn't be able to put them together again. Because Damon wasn't sure if the attachment he felt for Doctor William was his mind trying to survive all the abuse by looking for a safety, maybe even a paternal figure of sorts, or if it was the mind controlling the man so perfectly got over him.

"Damon."

Liz pulled him out of his rollercoaster of thoughts.

Damon broke eye contact with Doctor William, crushing his memories tight between a tyrannical fist, and along with them, his emotions.

That was not the time for a trip on his real life nightmare land.

She was still pointing a gun at her own ex husband, her eyes made of steel. Eyes of a mother, Damon knew, though he had never experienced that type of protective fierceness aimed at him.

"21051." The man breathed. "When I heard you were in town I didn't dare to believe it. How exquisite, you managed to adapt, to recover."

Damon cocked an eyebrow, feigning ignorance. "What are you even talking about? Are you clinically insane?"

The man huffed a small laugh, taking a step towards him. It took an inhumane amount of willpower to stop his body from its flight or fight instinct, but soon Liz was there, getting inbetween them.

"Stop talking nonsense Bill. One more move and I swear to you, I'll shoot. Don't test me." She moved her finger, letting it hover the trigger of her gun. "Get my daughter out of here, Damon."

He turned away, almost robotically, and thoroughly refused to even acknowledge the man. He would get Caroline out of her binders, would get her out of there, and get in the car with Liz.

Doctor William didn't matter anymore. Damon wouldn't let him matter. That man took too much from him for Damon to allow him to take more. Liz was his friend, one of the first ones Damon made in that century and Caroline didn't deserve to watch her father die either, if he could even be called as such.

Ripping the vervain embebed ropes that were keeping Caroline captive took him no effort. He didn't even feel the burn, hadn't felt it in so long he couldn't remember what the sensation was like.

What took an effort was pretending not to notice the glint on Doctor William's eyes as he watched his every movement. Damon forced himself to push the feeling away, focusing entirely on the blonde teenager.

"Can you walk?" Caroline winced, biting her bottom lip so as not to cry. She kept sneaking glances at her father, as if the monster in front of her would show even a drop of remorse. Damon moved to the side, blocking her view from the doctor. "Can you walk?' He repeated.

"Yeah, I think so." She whispered.

"I can carry you if you'd like."

Her eyes met his, and the dullness on them receded slightly as she took in a shuddering breath. Caroline shook her head, her brows furrowing. "No, no. I can walk."

He helped her up, and the steps he took away from the divorced couple were not only his, they also belonged to the bloodthristy darkness inside of him that was enveloping his fear, hiding it from view and from himself.

Caroline grunted when he helped her into the backseat, and Damon opened the trunk to take out a couple of blood bags her own mother had gotten for her. He waited while the girl downed the blood, her face completely transformed while she ripped it off with her teeth.

"You alright there?"

Caroline's eyes searched his face, a furrow in her brows, and Damon softened his eyes, trying to act more like himself and less like the

darkness that was now wrapped around him. She blinked. “Yeah. Are *you* alright?”

Damon gave her a side smile. “What? You think seeing your blood bothered me, blondie?”

As he expected, Caroline rolled her eyes, lying back in the backseat with a tired sigh. “You’re such a dick sometimes.”

But she was no longer holding herself as if she would break, so his teasing had worked.

He leaned against the car door, decidedly focusing on the sounds around them – the birds, the leaves moving with the wind, the small squirrel ruffling its tail. The word seemed duller, somehow, as if he wasn’t seeing as bright as he should.

“Why did he call you that number? Twenty thousand something?”

Trust Caroline to thank him for saving her and helping her get into a good place mentally by dragging him to talk about the one thing he didn’t want to think about.

Damon shrugged, making a face. “Who knows? Your pops is not the most sane person around, if you ask me.”

She peered at him. “Do you think… he’s actually sick? That he may have a mental illness?”

No .

That was the simple answer.

Damon watched the leaves above him and mulled over her question for a couple of seconds, Caroline’s gaze not leaving him.

He could tell her the truth. Say that yes, her father was sick in the sense he was a hateful being that deserved something far worse than death.

He *should* tell her the truth. The loss would hurt less along the way. Besides, what he thought wasn’t important, it wasn’t like they were close.

But when he glanced at Caroline, the unhidden fear in her eyes let him know she would carry what he said along with her forever – and forever was too long of a time for a vampire. Caroline was relying on

him now, at least until her mother showed up from where Liz was now tying her ex husband to the chair their daughter was once sitting at.

Maybe it was pity, or perhaps Damon just didn't want to hurt her more than what he planned to do already would.

"Why else would he attack his own daughter?" Damon cocked an eyebrow. "Your mother accepted you once she found out about you being a vampire, did she not? Why wouldn't he?"

Caroline's eyes didn't leave his, and Damon held her stare with the ease of a skilled liar. Her shoulders relaxed. "You're right."

"Always am." He sang-song.

"Shut up."

But now there was a small smile on her face.

It disappeared the moment Liz appeared on the front porch. "Get in the car, we're leaving."

Damon opened the passenger's seat, getting in. He closed the sheriff's car's door with a thud, watching from the rear view as the house Doctor William would be staying in for a short few hours.

His fate was sealed, Damon had already decided it.

"Are you alright?" Liz asked him, after she was done talking to her daughter.

"Just peachy." He smiled easily.

And he was, because once he got his revenge, he could finally leave his past behind and move on completely.

Chapter End Notes

> Oh, sweet summer child. If only that was how trauma worked...
> ANYWAYS
> Finn and Henrik meet again <3333
> lol Damon trying his best to be civil to H's siblings 'cause he doesn't want them to dislike him lest that hurts H's feelings VS Henrik, no fucks given, going straight to the offensive when Finn, Kol or anyone else dares to even look at Damon the wrong way
> (Unfortunately, Finn lit up the rest of the H's anger after Kol's

animosity towards Damon lol Henrik was still mad at Kol for the night of the dinner, so he was afraid Finn was going to do it as well (and honestly, he was, so it's good Henrik stopped him before because it would be harder for Henrik to forgive him later if he really treated Damon as a thing in front of him)
I always wondered 'what if Bill Forbes worked with Augustine?' It'd be so f*cked up lol
and now Damon is the one messed up :D will I ever stop hurting him? Yes, but it will take a while
Also, I feel like canon!Damon would just straight up kill Bill Forbes right there lmao no care whatsoever for the consequences, then later come to regret it, but Family men!Damon has a bit more self control in him. He knows Liz and Caroline would never forgive him for doing it.
So he will take his revenge cold, and with no witnesses.
Let me know what you think <333 I love reading your comments

Chapter 13: Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

> Thanks for the comments!
> [Graphic descriptions of torture below, Damon went loose in here. Also, another panic attack.]

See the end of the chapter for more notes

ELIJAH

“Took you long enough.” Rebekah opened the door as if the boarding house belonged to her, a dry martini in her hands.

She turned around, leaving the door to close behind her. Elijah gripped the door’s edge, feeling like he was barging in as he entered.

The house was completely silent, and Elijah would have been sure no one was inside if it wasn’t for the three heartbeats that came from within.

“So, what’s the reason for Nik’s tantrum this time?” Rebekah asked.

“He was unable to get what he wanted, what else?” He answered vaguely.

They walked past the old furniture, entering the living room, and Elijah was stunned to see Finn and Damon facing each other, a chess board on top of a small table between them.

Henrik had a book with him and was lying backwards with his legs swang above the back of one of the couches. When Finn touched his queen, Henrik twisted his upper body around to see what move would be made.

When he moved his queen, Finn seemed to leave an open chance for Damon to check his king, but Elijah knew that move all too well. It had been made against him multiple times, always grating Finn the victory, before Elijah finally caught on to it.

Damon lifted his eyes, meeting his gaze. Elijah smiled as a greeting.

He sat beside Henrik's head, only half paying attention to the game. Rebekah, though there was no more space in the couch, plopped down beside him, on the rounded Lawson arm.

Damon made his move, and in a testament to his unpredictably, did not fall for Finn's trap, or perhaps Damon had no idea what he was doing. Either way, instead of using his queen to check Finn's king, thus losing it to Finn's well placed bishop, the younger used his knight to eat said bishop.

Finn smiled, looking impressed, but his brother was a genius at chess. After managing to check Finn three different times, in which Finn blocked all of his movements, his brother won.

"You're good. Who taught you?"

" Emanuel Lasker ." Elijah raised both his eyebrows.

How did Damon manage to get Emanuel Lasker to teach him?

"Who?" Finn frowned.

"He was a famous chess player. The best in the world for almost three decades."

"People play chess against each other world wide?"

Elijah winced internally. Henrik sent him a look he understood all too well.

He had allowed his older brother to be locked into that coffin for so long Finn didn't know the commonest of things.

Damon stared at Finn in silence for a long minute.

"There's competitions happening all over the world, first country wide and once their winner is announced, they compete against the winners from the other countries." Damon pulled out his phone, sticking out his tongue while he tapped something on it. "Here, uhm, this is from last year. See? Viswanathan Anand won. He was already the world champion."

Finn held on to the phone passed to him awkwardly, squinting at the small display while he read over the words.

“Why don’t you try enrolling on it?” Henrik asked, swinging his legs out of the couch’s back and into Elijah’s lap. “Bet you would win.”

Finn offered him a small smile, shaking his head. “I wouldn’t be so sure.”

“So what? At least you’d have something to do.” Damon shrugged.

Finn was quiet for a moment.

“Perhaps the two of you have a point.” He conceded, at last.

Damon got up. “I’ll go check on the parmegiana.”

“You’ve made lunch?” Elijah took the chance, standing close to him.

“The lot of you forgot to feed my kid.” Damon deadpanned.

“Crap.” Rebekah cursed under her breath. “I knew we were forgetting something.”

Elijah glanced at the old clock by the corner of the living room worriedly.

It was past 3 p.m and Henrik indeed had yet to eat.

“Why didn’t you say anything?” Finn asked.

“I wasn’t that hungry. I had ice cream at the park.”

“You should have reminded us anyway.” Finn admonished.

“Okay, the truth is last time ‘Bekah insisted on cooking and I almost died trying to eat it.”

Henrik was right, her steak had been as hard as stone and the salt was completely over its correct amount. After two bites, Elijah pretended to be hungry for blood. Henrik did not have the same luck and had to rely on Kol to hide his food and throw it on the toilet while Rebekah was distracted.

“I just overcooked it a bit!” Rebekah defended herself. She turned to him, expectantly. “‘Lijah?”

He avoided her eyes, following Damon out of the living room.

“Traitors, all of you.” She complained. “I see you running with your

tail between your legs, ‘Lijah!”

He smiled, hurrying along after Damon. He met his pace, the both of them entering the kitchen.

“I’m sorry for sending them to you without warning.” He apologized, watching as Damon bent down to check the oven.

“I would have appreciated the warning, but it’s fine.” Damon poked the parmegiana with a fork. “I don’t mind this particular pair of siblings of yours.”

“So you would have minded the other pair?” He teased, leaning his hip against the sink, and regretted the move the moment Damon looked up from his crouching position, his eyes framed by large, thick eyelashes.

Elijah gripped the edge of the sink with both hands.

Damon closed the oven, getting up.

“Kol must be an acquired taste.” Elijah laughed at his words, but the smile he got in return had a strain to it. He tilted his head, studying Damon’s comportament attentively.

He seemed normal, but there was an edge to each and every of his movements that he normally didn’t have.

“Are you alright? Did something happen?”

Damon’s words were bitter as he ruffled through the cutlery cabinets. “Something always happens.”

“What is it?” Elijah stalked towards him. Now that he was near, he could see the muscles of Damon’s back shaking.

“Someone might come after Henrik tonight. Or several people.”

Elijah frowned, his hand hovered for a moment over Damon’s shoulder before he touched him, turning him around. Damon, contrary to what Elijah thought he would do, turned easily, letting him cup his jaw and lift his head.

The look on his eyes was hauntingly empty, the way a doll’s would be.

“Why?”

“I can’t say.”

Elijah didn’t let him pull away, emboldened by Damon’s unenthusiastic resistance.

“Talk. To me.”

He felt Damon’s Adam apple working against his thumb. “Someone who…” He licked his lips. “An enemy of mine is in town.”

“Who? Give me a name and they’re done for.” Damon’s back went taut. Elijah reformulated. “Or we can go after them together.”

“No.” Damon shook his head rapidly. He stepped back. “No. He’s mine and mine alone.”

Elijah searched for a sign of doubt so he could insist. There wasn’t any.

He tried anyway. “Let me help.”

“Then watch over Hal tonight.”

“Rebekah and Finn can protect Henrik – even Kol and Niklaus. I can call them, they’ll be here. I’ll go with you.”

Damon’s nose flared, a hint of anger filling his previously dull eyes. “This is my business. It has nothing to do with you.”

Elijah’s own anger was jabbed at that, and he trapped Damon between his body and the counter, their faces almost touching. At that moment, Damon’s obliviousness wasn’t as endearing as before. “It has *everything* to do with me.” There was still no recognition in the younger’s gaze, no sign that he knew of his not so hidden feelings. “Let me *help you* .”

“Then stay with Henrik.”

“How can you ask me to stand back knowing you’ll be putting yourself in danger? Have you forgotten I’m immortal? Use me to your advantage.”

Damon didn’t budge.

He gave Damon his back, running his hand through his hair.

Elijah fell in love with a stubborn mule.

He couldn't force the younger to accept his help, but he was unable to stop feeling hurt and frustrated at not being trusted on it.

So many secrets, Elijah didn't know where to begin searching to start unravelling them, didn't know if he even wanted to.

Was 'the enemy' a vampire older than him? One as old as he?

Was Stefan going with him? Did Damon have a backup as well?

"Are you taking your brother with you?"

"No."

Every answer brought him the opposite of peace.

"Are you trying to get yourself killed?"

"No." Damon held his gaze, and it was like he was a completely different person. Elijah came face to face with the man from the basement, to the night where Henrik undaggered him and Damon still distrusted him. Had he ever trusted him at all? Not with this, that was certain. "But this isn't about anyone else but me. I have to do this alone." Damon put a pile of plates on the counter near him, turned out the oven. "I am trusting you with Henrik; don't let him get hurt."

Damon put a pile of plates on the counter near him, turned out the oven.

He left the kitchen with the parmegiana in one hand and Elijah's heart in the other. Damon did not look back.

DAMON

He stood in the dark, listening to the sounds of the night.

An owl took off the moment it saw him arriving, as if sensing Damon was a dangerous predador and deciding it wanted nothing to do with being in his proximity, but Damon's target was not hiding between the

trees, he was in the clearing, sitting in a chair inside a torture chamber built with the single goal of tormenting vampires.

How fitting it was for him to be trapped there and not Damon.

He crossed the last round of trees, entering the clearing and walking up to the house.

The night was dark in the way that if it weren't for his supernatural sight he wouldn't have known where he was going and he walked past the chambers quietly, not making a sound in spite of how old the structure was.

Damon knew the doctor would be waiting for him, and he was. The moment Damon took his first step into the torture chamber, purposefully putting a tad more of strength on his foot and causing the wooden stair to creak, the man lifted his head, straightening himself from his previously slumped position.

Damon stopped a few feet away from him, hands in his pockets, watching.

"I knew you would come back." Doctor William said steadily, his voice carrying through the empty, quiet house. "My perfect specimen."

"I'm not yours anything." Damon retorted, carefully paying attention to any hint of mind control. He felt something stirring in him at the doctor's words, almost like preening.

Damon wanted to ask if he was imagining things, or if the doctor actually managed to mind control him, but he dreaded the possibility of Doctor Forbes denying it – even if the man did it to deceive him, to plant worries inside his head, Damon would never know the difference, not when it came to the man in front of him; a master of controlling his emotions and heartbeat.

The one who taught Damon how to hide his feelings so deeply he himself had difficulty sorting them out sometimes.

"I always wondered why you didn't come after me once you escaped. Was it because of the child?"

He did not react. "I left the boy in an orphanage as soon as I got out."

"Did you really? Then how come I met one Henrik Salvatore in the

town's square just two days ago?" The doctor smiled knowingly, but Damon ignored the alarm bells ringing on the back of his head.

He had left Henrik with Elijah, Rebekah and Finn for a reason. He'd even encouraged Stefan to sleep at Elena's, instead of having a *brother's night* – as his brother ridiculously named it – that night so his rabbit eating brother wouldn't be home.

"I'm tired of hearing you talk." Damon reduced the distance between them, ripping the chains holding the doctor's legs in place and kicked the back of the chair with enough strength for it to topple over. He swung a leg around Doctor William's torso and bent down to rip the doctor's shirt off. "You see, if I wanted a conversation I'd find someone more interesting."

He took out a flashlight, turning it on and putting it on the floor. He wanted the doctor to see everything – it was only fair, Damon had always been made to watch.

He held out the scalpel he'd bought just for that, holding it close to the other's face.

Doctor William's eyes largened slightly, the first reaction Damon managed to get out of him.

The first of many, he promised himself, finally feeling a spark of satisfaction and anticipation over the indifference that had yet to let go of him.

"Fitting, isn't it?" He asked, smiling. "Does this bring you some memories? To me it does."

Doctor William licked his lips, his eyes darting from Damon's to the scalpel before he closed them. When he opened his eyes again, there was acceptance in them.

Damon wouldn't allow him to accept his fate so easily.

"I knew you would murder me as well." Doctor William swallowed.

Damon had to give it to him; he actually managed to sound condescending.

But.

And that was a big 'but'.

Damon had no plans of killing him.

"'Murder' you?" He tilted his head. "Why would I murder you, doc?" He pressed the scalpel against the man's cheek, dragging it down, cutting the flesh as he went. Blood began gushing out, the shade of red suiting William Forbes sublimely. "Why would I ever do that?"

He brought his wrist to his mouth, ripping his skin with his teeth and grabbed the back of the doctor's head, shoving his wrist against the man's mouth forcibly. He held his grip firmly, and watched understanding set itself onto William Forbes' round eyes.

He took his wrist away, pushing the man's head down with enough force to hear it crack against the floor. While the doctor groaned, his bare chest heaving, Damon began to reproduce the same 'Y' incision that was cut onto him over and over again during his years in the lab.

The grunts mutated into screams so loud they reverberated in the room and into the night, and Damon had to use his thighs to keep the man locked into place while he trashed.

Damon had never been allowed to scream, or squirm away, having been trained to keep quiet. The sounds didn't bother him, though and neither did the attempts at escaping. They were music to his ears, as people say.

He continued on, not minding the nastiness. He may have cut a bit too deep in some parts, blood splashing on his face, but he supposed he could be forgiven; it was his first time, after all. If Doctor William died he would come back anyways.

When he was finished, the man was a mess of sweat, tears and blood, hissing and trembling all over, nothing like the poised doctor Damon knew.

Did he too look like that once he was let out of the operation table back then?

A puddle had formed around the doctor, Damon's foot an island in the middle of all the blood. When he stepped back, his shoe left a red footprint on the floor.

"Oops, you're bleeding a lot." He nudged the doctor's feet with his dirty one. "Is that what it's supposed to be like? You'll die if you keep going like that."

“Abomination.” The man grunted.

“No.” Damon furrowed his brows, shaking his head. “I’m your perfect specimen, remember?”

William Forbes coughed blood, still twitching uncontrollably.

Damon sat beside him on the dry part of the floor and crossed his legs. He rested his head against his right hand, watching the man try to curl into himself, his movements restrained by the hands still chained to the chair’s arms. “You know, once I got home this morning I searched your name on Google.” He tapped his own chin. “You graduated from medical school in Whitmore College in 1984, and that’s when you started doing your residency, but that’s not all that you did, was it? No, you started working for Augustine. Eighteen years of my life were taken away from me by you, reckon I should return the gift, don’t you think, Doctor William?”

“Kill me.” He heard. It was a whisper at first. It was repeated again, and again, growing louder until it became shouting. The blood loss must have gotten to him because his rationality was clearly taking a vacation. “Kill me!”

He’d never been given the mercy of death, no matter how much he pleaded for it.

Doctor William died whispering the same words under his breath, and Damon did not move a muscle until the man’s heartbeat was long gone.

He brought his eyes to his bloodied hands, turning them around.

Almost done.

Damon got up and threw William Forbes’ body across his shoulder, walking upstairs and leaving his corpse there before going back to clean the mess he'd made of the floor.

There was no time to lose, the trip to his second location was long and the night was running past quickly.

The tomb hadn’t changed in the slightest from the last time Damon had been there, in the beginning of the 1900’s, when he was still

obsessed with the idea of getting Katherine out.

Once he let go of the man's nape with a little push, Doctor William staggered past the tomb's barrier, throwing up blood and bile all over himself and the rocky ground. It was of no use; he'd drunk the human blood from the blood bag.

Damon threw the blood bag inside the tomb, a bit dripping down, forming a small puddle. Maybe in a few days the doctor would shove his face into the ground to be able to get a single drop of blood from it.

"They will know what you've done." The man who would soon be just a nightmare of his past spat. "My daughter, Liz… They will know, you're the only one who was with them."

"Will they?" Damon cocked an eyebrow. "For all they know this morning was the first time we've met, why would I go through all this trouble?"

He had covered everything. Liz received a message from her ex-husband berating her for giving Caroline the opportunity to kill more humans, and promising to return with an even better program for self control.

He trusted Elijah to cover up for him should Liz ask of his whereabouts, and if that wasn't enough, Damon was sure he'd have Rebekah and Finn as alibis.

"Besides, you've upset Liz so much she might not even investigate and think 'good riddance'." He continued. "Who knows who else you've told about the little vampire-rehab program you had planned for your daughter? They were probably the ones to release you from your chains."

Doctor William struggled to sit up – with his arms chained to his torso, everything was an ordeal. Damon had pondered on letting his arms free, surely in two decades it would be fun to see the marks he left on the tomb's walls once reality became too much to endure, but how would he know for sure the newly made vampire wouldn't kill himself to escape the torment?

That just wouldn't do.

"They'll look for me."

“And they will find you. In eighteen years, seven months and 28 days. I may be late when it comes to the hour.” With that, he grabbed a hold of the rock used to cover the inside of the tomb and began to push it, blocking the tomb’s tunnel from view. “Hope you’ll enjoy those years as much as I did.”

He let out a long breath, closing his eyes.

It was over. He was free.

Keep your eye open, 21051.

Damon opened his eyes, shaking his head. He was still on the stairs that gave way to the tomb.

He took out his phone. He had to check on Henrik, Elijah and the others. Make sure they were fine.

Your veins are still showing, control yourself.

Damon searched for Henrik’s contact with hands that were starting to tremble, pressing his phone against his ear once it began to ring. “Hal.”

“Dad?” Henrik’s voice was half muffled, but he sounded normal, if not sleepy.

Damon eyed his phone screen. It was 2 a.m.

He cleared his throat. “Sorry, I woke you up, didn’t I? ”

He should’ve called Elijah. Clearly Damon had overestimated Doctor William; they hadn’t been attacked at all.

“Yeah, but it’s fine.” Sheets moved. *“Where’re you?”*

“I’m getting home soon, alright? Go back to sleep.”

“Mhm, kay.”

Damon hung up, trying to focus on where he was going while he entered the protective darkness of the forest once again.

Your teeth haven't receded at all, I’m disappointed.

He didn’t know how long it took before the trembles started to become too much, reaching the point where he couldn’t stand

anymore and he fell on his knees on the cold ground of the forest.

Damon dug his hands on the earth, using the rough texture to remind himself of where he was; out, free, and decidedly not back in that hell hole. He heaved and gagged, bile surged upon his throat.

He wasn't there. He wasn't.

But memories of that time kept flashing throught his mind. Damon blinked heavily, struggling to keep himself in the present.

When he came back to himself, his nails were bloody from dugging a hole in the ground, a lump was logged on his throat and his phone was vibrating against his thigh.

"Elijah."

"Damon." Elijah breathed. *"It's been four hours, I was growing concerned."*

Damon grit his teeth, but the sobs passed through anyway, silent, as they always were, but his body shook with the strength of them.

Somehow, out of every single shitty thing that day had brought, it was someone expressing worry for him that drove him to the brink of crying.

He heard the front door opening from the other end of the line.

" *Where are you?"*

He looked around confusedly, finding himself in the house of his childhood, or what was left of it after Stefan burned it down.

"At… ah- the old Salvatore state."

"I'll be there in five."

Control yourself, your veins are starting to show again.

"I-" He couldn't *breathe* .

Leave it to starve for two weeks this time, perhaps that will help it learn.

"Damon, are you alright?"

He struggled to speak. "It should've– it should've been over."

“What should have been over?”

Why wasn’t it over?

They were all dead, every single one of them. It was supposed to be done, he should be free from the weight of his memories by now, there was nothing left to fear.

So why did his memories keep coming back to the surface?

He’d lost control completely, his hearing and vision reaching out as far as his senses could go. He could hear Doctor William’s screams far away, the sound mingling with his own pained grunts from his memories.

His hands closed into fists and he threw his phone away with a roar and began punching the nearest tree. “Why isn’t it over!?”

With another enraged noise, he punched the tree again. His hands were mangled, a mess of blood and open wounds, but he couldn’t stop.

It was only when the motion of punching became too tiring to continue that Damon fell into the gritty ground like a puppet whose strings had been cut, covering his ear to stop himself from hearing the screams, but it was of no help when the sounds came from his own mind.

Its bones are regrowing already.

The speed is exceptional.

Slow your healing so intern Grayson can take his notes, 21051.

Hands grabbed his leather covered arms and Damon hissed, baring his teeth at the stranger, but came eye-to-eye with Elijah.

“Damon.” Elijah’s brows curled worriedly.

Damon scrunched up his nose, warm tears sprouting out of his eyes. He sniffled, lowering his head and shoved his face against Elijah’s abdomem, sobbing rather pathetically, his hands clawing on the fabric of Elijah’s suit.

And whether it was from Elijah’s hand rubbing his back, or the warmth that was never present in the lab, or perhaps even the reassurances whispered against the crown of his head, it didn’t

matter.

The noises stopped, his hearing concentrated on hearing Elijah's heartbeat, and the memories retreated to the dark place in his head he avoided with all his might.

Sometime after, the rage and pain both left him, and Damon was left slumping against Elijah, feeling safe enough for his mind to rest, and he fell asleep near someone who wasn't Henrik for the first time in over fifty years.

Chapter End Notes

> Damon gets his long awaited revenge!
> And has a breakdown on the process. He's not having a great time, guys.
> But there was COMFOOOORT.
> Did you guys think there was too much gore? I personally feel like there wasn't enough, but oh well.

Chapter 14: Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

Fasten your seatbelts.
[Warnings; violence, mentions of blood.]
Also, short chapter today, sorry. Exams are coming.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Elijah couldn't take his eyes away from Damon even if he wanted to.

He gently massages the area between Damon's forehead with his thumb, easining the frown that was formed there. Damon doesn't even stirr, still draped across his thighs and lower chest.

Elijah managed to find a spot against a tree to rest his back. It isn't comfortable by any means, the tree's trunk stiff against his back, but he does not dare change his position lest he wakes Damon up.

Damon looks different when he sleeps.

The only other time Elijah saw him unconscious was when he was dying from Tyler Lockwood's bite. Damon isn't being afflicted by the symptoms of the bite right now, but something else is bothering him, something painful enough to make him shut down completely.

Elijah had never seen Damon so distressed before, not even the night he found the younger hiding inside his own cupboard.

He brushes Damon's fringe back, revealing the unblemished skin of his forehead. He looks so innocent like this, asleep, relaxed. Not a frown in sight. It's an otherworldly contrast with the drops of blood that covered the rest of his face and neck.

Elijah has a few ideas about what happened while Damon was away. What he wants to know is why Elijah found him in such a state.

What happened to him to leave him in shambles?

Damon's hands are twisted, still damaged despite the fact that Damon himself seems fine, and it reminds him of Henrik's words on the night Damon almost died; it's the conditioning.

Just what happened to you? Who hurt you like this?

He wishes he can just ask, and that Damon will just answer.

A nighthawk flew towards them, curling its talons around a branch above them.

Elijah scarcely notices it, his attention belonged to Damon at that moment, on every single part of their bodies that are touching.

He shouldn't be using the opportunity to trace the hairs Damon's brows, but he is, because Elijah is greedy and he always wants more.

Damon nudges his head against the caress to his cheek the way a stray cat would, a small noise leaving his throat, but he doesn't wake.

The sun will soon begin to rise, the sky is already a lighter shade of blue on a small strip following the area above the three's peaks.

His phone vibrates on the ground next to him and Elijah quickly picks it up, turning the vibration down, but the sound is enough to rip Damon away from his restful sleep.

Damon hums, snuggling closer. He can't help himself from curling his arms thigher around Damon's waist, or from scenting his hair.

The pleasantness doesn't last.

Damon jerks himself awake, shuddering, looking completely out of it for a couple of seconds, before his eyes sharpens.

"Hey." Elijah greets, watching him for a sign of awkwardness. He doesn't want a reprise of the last time, when Damon avoided him for an entire day, but there's little he can do about it.

"Hey." Damon croaks back. He sits back, hair tousled. Their knees are still touching. "Sorry, guess I partied too hard last night."

It's one of the most absurd things he's ever heard, what with the tear tracks on Damon's cheek and the redness of his eyes.

He was waiting for this to happen, for Damon to shake himself off and put on a brave face. Elijah really wishes he wouldn't.

If Damon keeps pushing his problems away and bottling up his feelings, those breakdowns of his would always happen again. He can't, in good conscience, let Damon pretend nothing happened without reaching out first and trying to help.

When he doesn't laugh, or make any motion of letting him get away with his attempt at deflecting, Damon stops smiling, the forced cheerfulness on his face falling.

Elijah dares to take one of Damon's hands in his, mindful of the open cuts and crusted blood.

He's being bold, bolder than he's ever been before, but if this day has taught him something is that he's been wasting time he might not have. Damon isn't immortal, and he's a young vampire. When Damon left him in the boarding house's kitchen yesterday, Elijah was distraught in a way he hadn't been in years.

Earth is populated with vampires older than Damon, stronger, and Damon is one of the most stubborn, overly independent people he's ever met – quick to act, smarter than most, but still easily killed.

If Elijah is to gain his full trust, he has to make his intentions clearer. If there's a next time, he fears he'll lose his mind if he's not allowed to help.

Under his watch, the cuts begin to close. Elijah wants to kiss the now healed hand, lick it clean, but he fears if he does as he wishes he will break whatever spell-like bubble has fallen upon them.

Daringly, he does press a kiss to the mangled knuckles and when he looks up, Damon's cheeks are flushed, his bright eyes wide while he stares at him with the tip of his brows curved upwards endearingly.

Elijah doesn't look away, doesn't let go of Damon's hand, and Damon doesn't pull it away.

"You called me last night."

"I did."

"Thanks for coming to get me. And for staying, I guess. You didn't have to."

"Of course I did." Elijah disagrees solemnly. "I will always come when you need me."

There's something different between them, he realizes, and it comes from Damon. He's unexpectedly vulnerable, and there's an openness to him that wasn't there before.

Then Damon frowns, staring at something beside Elijah's head. "Why is there blood on your ear?"

He touches his ear, scraping on the skin there and when he holds his hand in front of his face, his nails are dirty with blood.

"It's not mine. You were right to leave Henrik with us, we were attacked last night."

Damon's eyes widen slightly and the hand Elijah isn't holding curls into a fist. "He really did it – I thought I was overthinking it… but when I called Henrik he was sleeping, he didn't tell me anything."

"Henrik doesn't know. We slaughtered them before they could wake him."

"Oh," Damon nods, brows furrowed. "Right." He stares at their hands, and Elijah suppresses a shudder when Damon's thumb hovers over the sensitive area of his inner wrist. "That's good, he would have been scared." He says, as an afterthought.

Elijah squeezes Damon's hand, watching his body language. It's manipulative on his part, but that's when he finds his opening.

"I have to ask; will there be other attacks?"

He almost regrets asking. He doesn't want to be the cause of that heartbroken look on Damon's face, he just wants to know why. Why were those men after Henrik? They weren't from the council, so how did they know about vampires, and most importantly, what was the connection between them and Damon and Henrik?

"No." Damon shakes his head slightly. "I- they should be all gone now. I'm sorry… they were *my* enemies, I shouldn't have dropped that on you and then just left."

"There's nothing to apologize for. I wish I could have helped more. That you would have allowed me to help more."

"You've done more than enough."

Elijah huffs. "I've barely done anything. I've faced much more dangerous enemies than some seasoned hunters."

Damon scoffs. "They weren't hunters."

Elijah frowned, his theory rebutted. "Who were they, then?"

Damon's eyes darken, and to Elijah's hopeful astonishment, he seems to be going over an internal battle.

He stays silent, unmoving, afraid of doing something to scare Damon away and cause him to retreat on himself.

But in a testament to his sibling's inconvenient ways, his phone rings right then, and the moment between them is broken.

Damon pulls his hand away, getting up and Elijah already misses its warmth. "Ignoring someone?" Damon slaps the back of his jeans so as to get rid of the dirt.

Elijah stares at Kol's name on his display, thumb hovering on the red button. He has no right to be angry at Kol, but irrationally, he is.

He refuses the call, stuffing his phone in his pocket. "It's Kol. I'll call him back later."

"Yeah, well, I gotta go." Damon scrubs his own face, using his phone's camera as a mirror. The blood leaves his cheeks with the same consistency of clay. "Hey, can you do me a *little* favor?" Damon's index finger and thumb get close to each other. "If Sheriff Forbes calls, tell her I was home the entire night? We had shots, listened to the newest pop songs of the year. You *loved* 'firework' by Katy Perry."

Elijah is already smiling. He shakes his head amusedly. "Firework by who?"

Damon smiles back, and he's relieved to see there's nothing forced about it. Elijah's obvious actions from earlier were clearly well received, and the ease between them is still there.

"Later, Elijah."

He's gone just like that.

Elijah sighs, staring at the place Damon disappeared from.

He was so close.

And now it doesn't feel right to move on with his plan.

He digs out his phone out of his pockets.

Kol picks up on the third ring. Elijah is almost in his car.

“Kol. Did something happen?”

“Rebekah killed one of them after he spat on her shoes, Nik and I hanged the other two by their ankles. I think in what- five hours vervain is gonna be out of their systems?”

“I would assume so.” Niklaus agrees.

That is less time than he thought he would have, but it will have to do.

It’s when he hears a bell’s noise. The second it comes, Elijah also becomes aware of the voices and the faint music in the background.

“Where are you?”

“ *Mystic Grill. We were growing bored.”* Kol answers. *“Can you bring me a Gin and Tonic, darling?”*

He pulls his phone back to stare at it, as if it would help him understand what he’s hearing.

“I want a Negroni, please.” Rebekah orders.

“At the Mystic Grill? You left them all alone in the warehouse?”

“ *Pass me the phone.”* Niklaus asks. When he speaks next, his voice sounds closer. “ *Brother, they’re humans hung by the ceiling. They’re not going anywhere.”*

“Yeah, Lijah, stop being such a headache.” Rebekah complains. “ *Come drink with us! Let’s celebrate a job well done!”*

Elijah has stopped believing in the norse gods over a millennia ago, and he doesn’t believe in a higher force either, but this can only be a sign he’s made the right decision.

He opens his car’s door and starts the car. “Is Finn still with Henrik?”

“ *Yes, he said he wanted nothing to do with our savagery.”* He can *hear* Niklaus rolling his eyes. “ *Should I order for you as well, brother?”*

Elijah takes a turn to the opposite direction of town. “ *Yes. Wait for me, I’ll be there.”*

He’s in front of the warehouse in a matter of minutes, the old building unassuming, but the interior is quite well conserved.

Methodically, Elijah begins to take out his suit jacket, then unbutton his vest. He looks for a place to hang them, and settles for the door.

Elijah doesn't bother taking out his shirt – it's a black one. He doesn't intend for this to get bloody, but if a few drops taint his shirt, no one in town would notice it, and if his siblings smell the blood he can simply say it's from their earlier battle.

A bloodied dagger shines between him and the humans, lying on the floor. It's probably the one used to cut the moribunds. Elijah takes it, tilts his head as he approaches the two trapped men.

"Good morning. It's a beautiful day outside."

A groan coming from one of the bodies is his only greeting.

Niklaus and Kol made a professional work of hanging them upside down – and it spared him the trouble of finding a creative way to stage an accidental death. Blood gushes out slowly from their arms, following the path determined by gravity until it drips down from their shoulders.

He stops in front of the awakened one.

This was the one that managed to sneak into the boarding house, going as far as taking the first steps to the first floor before Elijah grabbed his throat and threw him all the way across the living room and past the open door into the pebbled street.

Elijah scarcely allows himself to admire his own, or his siblings' violent work, or to take pleasure in other's pains – there's no pride in subjugating a weaker being.

Unless those beings got in his way and tried to harm his family. And this one, in particular, came really close to his sleeping younger brother.

"No, no, no! Not again, please, I'll tell you everything about Augustine!" The man's voice is a wrecked shriek. "It's what you want to know, right? About Augustine and Damon Salvatore?"

Elijah stops, the sharp dagger hovering over the bleeding cut on the blond's arm, frowning.

Augustine .

He finally has a *name* .

It's the second chance he's had up till now to figure out what happened to Damon, to know why the fierce, fiery vampire sometimes looked like he was about to crumble.

But the man was dead now, Elijah is sure. Damon's face had been more red than not, and the dilation of his pupils spoke of unfinished adrenaline.

Had Elijah not met with Damon, he would now be tricking the blond into a deal that would make him speak. It was the reason why he refrained himself from killing this one and stopped Rebekah and Niklaus from killing the other two; to find out who this Augustine was.

Because things had changed yesterday. Elijah had been giving Damon his space, accepting knowing only what Damon deemed necessary, or just what he wanted to share, but when Damon shut him down, and left to face an enemy Elijah had no idea what or who he was, he'd decided he was done waiting.

But Damon had almost told him everything – he would have told him if Kol hadn't called and interrupted them. Knowing more about it now wasn't worth betraying Damon's trust in him.

Would there be a next time? Would Damon ever come so close to telling him again?

He stares at the dagger, conflicted, but at last overcomes his curiosity and brings the blade to the vertical cut on the man's arm, piercing the skin, deeper than necessary if his intent was to make him bleed out enough for the vervain to leave his body faster.

He crouches down. Meets the hanging blond man eye-to-eye.

"Please." The blond man sobs, scrunching up his face while he cries. His face's been disfigured, both eyes swollen to the point of being almost shut, and when he speaks next Elijah can see a few teeth missing. "I have a family."

"I know. Everyone has a family." Elijah says in sympathy. "And you messed with mine."

The area just above the clavicle is the one that gives access to some of the most important arteries in the human body. The cut there is

shallow, well made, and the technique speaks of Kol's skills. It's just enough to make the man bleed, but not die from blood loss.

Elijah digs the blade inside the slash, twisting it just in the direction where the subclavian artery is, grazing at it.

Blood begins to fill the cut in an extraordinary speed, falling down the blond's neck, face, and at last dripping into the puddle on the floor beneath the human's head.

He checks his watch. He's been there for ten minutes already.

Elijah pays no attention to the blond's whining while he does the same to the man's unconscious partner.

Good for him , he supposes, pulling the dagger away. *He'll die sleeping.*

It's a mercy Elijah doesn't grant many, and he wouldn't have done it if he weren't in such a hurry.

He steps back, hearing the human's hearts start to give out and places the dagger at the exact place he found it, stepping back again to check if everything's the same as it was when he arrived.

Sufficiently satisfied that his siblings won't find out what he did, Elijah takes out his handkerchief and cleans his bloodied hands.

When the door closes behind him, he's already buttoning his jacket.

Chapter End Notes

Notes:
THIS GOT COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL
Honestly, I swear, Elijah began to write himself mid-chapter and straight up flirt and I was like, sir, what are you doing, that's not how this was supposed to go????
It's not myf ault, it's Damon's. He traumatized the noble stag so much that Elijah went all in.
Anyways, as you can see, they're getting closer to finding out about Augustine. I had an internal battle here deciding whether or not Elijah would have gone over Damon's head to figure out what happened to him, but it felt too much like a betrayal and anticlimactic for him to find out that way. It just didn't seem right.
Also, I wish I could have fit in the scene of the original siblings killing a bunch of people on the frontyard while Henrik slept on

the first floor, unaware of the slaughter happening just below his window, but I couldn't lmaooooooo so just imagine the mess Rebekah, Kol and Klaus when they find out the men are dead: YOU CUT TOO DEEP

Elijah watching them blame each other in silence cause if he doesn't say anything then he's not lying:

Also, next week I have exams so I won't be posting anything cause I have to ❖❖focus❖❖

Chapter 15: Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

> Hello guys, so sorry for the disappearance. Life happened, again. I had writer's block, and also couldn't find my way around the plot until one day it hit me straight in the face :D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He had thought he would be feeling like shit the entire day, but all he could think about was Elijah and the time they spent in the woods.

Elijah had come for him. Really came for him, and stayed with him, anchoring him to reality when Damon felt like he was about to lose his mind.

He knew the feeling wouldn't last – happiness was never something he felt for long –, but for now he felt light on his feet while he crossed his doorshold, listening to the heartbeats inside.

He'd known Henrik was fine, Elijah had told him that, but Damon only *really* relaxed when he saw his kid safe and sound in front of him, eating cereal without a care in the world while he watched a long movie separated in episodes called Star Trek on the living room's TV.

"–described as platonic."

Damon wondered if he should run past them and take a shower, or if it would be considered rude to ignore Finn.

Yes, it would be rude.

He leaned against the doorframe, watching their conversation. The confusion on Finn's face was relatable – Star Trek was the most confusing thing Henrik's ever made him watch.

"I do not understand." The man said, once Henrik finished his explanation on something Damon had only caught the end of. "If they're Thy'la, how are they not involved romantically?"

"Because it's the sixties, people couldn't be openly gay in the sixties."

If anything, Finn seemed even more confused.

“Why not?”

“Because it was a death sentence, of sorts. It wasn't accepted.” Damon entered the conversation, approaching them.

Henrik's eyes lightened up, and he jumped from the couch to throw himself at him – quite literally.

His socked foot got caught on the top of the sofa's rest, and Henrik yelped in panic, flailing his arms beside him like a clumsy bird as he started falling. Finn quickly rounded the couch, but Damon got there first, wrapping an arm around the boy’s waist and stopping him from sprawling himself on the floor.

“What did I tell you about climbing the furniture?”

“That if I kept doing it I'd break my handsome face.”

Damon snorted, flicking the kid in the nose. Henrik shouted, pretending to be outraged, but he was still smiling largely.

“That's what you get for being overly smug.” Damon told him, putting him down.

He pretended not to notice Finn's eyes on them. He was not in the mood for original siblings being nosy.

Finn, however, seemed to at least respect boundaries better than the rest of the Mikaelsons, because though Damon knew he must have smelled the blood hiding underneath his leather jacket, he didn't mention it.

“Good morning.”

“Morning.” Damon greeted back, and Henrik ran back to his brother.

“What were we talking about?” Henrik asked.

Finn twitched, body turning to face them. “Why was it a death sentence?”

Damon frowned, now confused himself. “Well, it wasn't considered normal. Or correct, society wise.”

“Since when?”

Damon’s frown deepened. “Since always?”

“It was common in the old times.” Henrik explained, and oh, Damon had forgotten Finn spent over a thousand years in a coffin and he was Norse – part of a society that believed in gender bending, crossdressing gods. “The reason for the changes are mostly religious, I will show you the holy books so you can understand, there's like, three big ones and several others.”

Finn looked so lost Damon felt sorry for the poor bastard. He was a bit tedious, and so serious and broody he reminded Damon of Stefan on his worst moments, but Damon knew what it was like to be thrown into a different time with no safety net to back one up.

Damon had no one to help him but himself – he wasn't about to watch his son's brother go through the same without doing anything to help.

“Tell you what, why don't you let me take a shower, and we both fill him up on what happened during the years he spent sleeping?”

“Cool!” Henrik shouted. “Dad's the best at storytelling.”

“Lies and slander.” Damon shouted, already on the first floor.

“He even used to do the voices.” Henrik whispered.

Damon rolled his eyes, getting under the shower.

His kid would one day ruin his reputation completely.

“And last year, the first ever black president of the United States was elected.”

Finn took a long sip of his whiskey.

“I'm still hung up on humanity surviving two world wars.”

Finn had been the most horrified while watching the video of a nuclear bomb exploding. Damon wondered how it would have felt if he’d lived in those times, and found out about the bombed cities in the morning journal.

“Yeah, humans suck.” Henrik nodded somberly, then turned his mood around completely. “Hey! Can I have some popcorn?”

“Try not to burn yourself.” Damon warned.

He heard Henrik's huff all the way from the kitchen.

“It was *one* time!”

“I don't understand how he's so desensitized to all of it.” Finn stared at him almost accusingly.

Damon cocked an eyebrow. What was it to him?

“Everyone is desensitized. I suppose things were calmer during your time, but there's war somewhere in the world at all times, if you get hung up on it you'll forget to live.”

“This cannot be normal.”

“It’s the new normal,” Damon shrugged.

Modern times were much better compared to the past in certain points, but if there was one thing Damon had to point out as a downsizing, it would be the violence. It didn’t bother him himself, of course – Damon was a vampire, he was bound not to care about human affairs, but to think this was the world Henrik would grow up in?

Thinking of the boy facing the world as it was as a human made his stomach knot.

“Like I said, there’s nothing to be done about it, you just have to accept it.”

Finn shook his head, disagreement all over his face.

What a pity, if the guy did get hung up on the topic he wouldn’t enjoy his time in the twenty one century.

“You’re wrong.”

Damon lifted both his eyebrows, darkly amused. “Whatever you say, bud.”

Finn was not his brother, and definitely not his problem.

He already had an annoying sibling to care about, and Stefan took over most of his patience.

Stefan was stalling, poking Damon's books, looking around his room as if something new was to be seen, as if Damon's room wasn't basically bare, his most treasured belongings hidden in a couple of locked drawers – a habit he'd developed back in his childhood, when every move of his was watched by his father and properly criticized.

"Stef," He sighed from his place in his bed. "You'll be late to pick up your girlfriend in…" He tilted his head towards the clock by the fireplace and smirked. "Ah- you're already late."

His brother made an exasperating sound, standing on the only corner in his room the sunlight didn't reach because he was also brooding and quite overdramatic.

Damon shouldn't have told him about the attack on their house, should have found another excuse for the smell of blood that lingered on the porch and in the street.

"I don't understand how you can be so normal about this, how you can trust them so blindly–"

Damon huffed. "Be careful, brother, you're bordering the line of hypocrisy."

"Damon, this isn't a joke." Stefan urged him to understand. Damon understood, he understood better than his brother would ever know because Damon was one of only three people in the entire world that knew everything about the ropes of what happened and the whys.

Which was why as soon as his brother left, Damon would be spending the entire morning researching for signs of Augustine still being active.

"What if they didn't kill them all?"

"Have you met Elijah and Klaus?" Damon cocked an eyebrow. "They're all dead, Stefan. I don't know about Kol, Finn and Rebekah, but I've seen Klaus and Elijah in action; those guys are dead." He dragged the last work out. "Ten feet underground, worm food dead."

Stefan didn't seem convinced.

"Those people were a danger to Hal, Stef, his siblings wouldn't leave them alive."

His brother's forehead was still creased, but he seemed less skeptical

about it.

“I can’t believe you sent me to Elena’s without telling me anything.” He repeated the same words he said when Damon first told him of Augustine’s members attacking – embellishing his telling by saying those were people sent by the council.

Damon was really counting on Stefan’s dislike for the originals because if his brother talked to Elijah about it the story would not add up.

“I’ll invite you when you’re of age.”

Stefan rolled his eyes. “This is my cue to leave, you’re starting to think you’re funny.”

Damon snorted, getting up and walking up to his little brother, initiating the hug. “Be safe, alright?”

Stefan curled an arm around his neck. “Yes, okay.”

He pulled back, gripping the back of Stefan’s neck. He met his brother’s eyes reassuringly. “I won’t let Klaus find out about Elena, okay? Just enjoy your trip, I’ll hold the fort while you’re gone.”

Stefan pressed his lips close, the same way he used to do when he was a kid and Damon promised to cover for whatever mess he’d concocted. His voice was garbled when he spoke again. “Yeah, okay.”

Damon scowled over the ache in his heart. “Don’t get squishy feely at me, dude. C’mon.”

Stefan laughed wetly, nodding his head. The tears welling his eyes thankfully disappeared and he shoved him off with a little push. “Always a dick.”

“Always.” Damon smiled.

“Alright, I'm off.”

“Finally!” He cheered.

Stefan threw a pillow at him, leaving the room just in time to avoid the one Damon threw back.

He fell back against his mattress, his legs hanging out or the mattress with his feet almost touching the floor, and looked up at the ceiling,

listening to Stefan's movements on the ground floor.

The second he heard the car start and the engine moving away, he got up, went to Henrik's room and sat by the boy's desk, where the laptop stood.

Henrik would be having lunch with Rebekah and Kol, so Damon still had at least four hours to research.

Step by step, he managed to get the Google page to open.

Oh, how he hated technology.

'Augustine, Whitmore', he typed slowly on the keypad.

A couple of links showed, but they were all about people called Augustine, so he added 'medical research' to it.

Nothing.

Just as he expected.

After an hour of no results, Damon closed the laptop, and started looking for other things to do.

He scarcely had free time, too occupied raising Henrik on his own, and trying to get used to the new century, and making sure he was too busy so he wouldn't have time to think of anything else.

Now, Damon had nothing to worry about and he felt almost… safe.

And he didn't know what to do with it.

Of course that was when he started thinking about Elijah.

He hadn't seen Elijah at all the past few days, since the man texted him about needing to follow his chaotic blond brother on a trip to sabotage his attempts on creating hybrids.

Hybrids.

As if Damon needed another thing to worry about.

So they hadn't talked at all, Elijah and him, not that he was bothered by it – Damon wasn't a teenager who couldn't spend a few days away from the person he liked.

And yet he couldn't stop thinking about him.

Finally, Damon gave up and decided to do something he'd never, ever, ever thought he would do; vent to a friend.

It was just his luck that the only friend he had and trusted with this was Ric, a judging dick.

"Elijah Mikaelson?" Ric's voice was a whisper-shout. "The original vampire?" He looked around like someone would jump on them at any minute, as if Damon hadn't scanned the entire place before spilling his secret. "Hal's brother?"

Damon cocked an eyebrow. "Do you know another one? I feel like there's no need for all these titles."

Ric stared at him, mouth half open, then he started laughing. Damon *hated* him.

He waved Colin, the barman, over for another refill. "You are joking." When Daemon didn't react apart from finishing his glass, Ric shook his head. "You're insane."

Damon knew.

Fuck.

He groaned, lowering his head until his cheek was pressed against the counter.

"There, there. It's fine." Ric's little taps to his shoulder were more playful than comforting. His first friend in sixty years was a *dick* . "How are you going to tell Hal? Does he know already?"

"You know, I think he does – thanks Colin." Damon sighed, nursing the glass closer. "He tried to be sneaky about it, but there wasn't anything subtle about the book on Viking Courtship he left open on the small table near the couches a few days ago."

Ric shook his head in amusement. "He's parent trapping you, you know."

"Parent trapping?" Damon parroted, furrowing his brows.

"Playing matchmaker."

Damon nodded his head. "Sounds like him."

Ric hummed.

“So what are you going to do?”

Damon downed his glass, the two ice cubes on it making a thrilling noise when they bumped into each other.

“I don't know yet.”

“Whatever it is, I'll support you.”

Damon wrinkled his nose, giving Ric a little shove. “Ew, don't come at me with your sapness, man.”

Ric laughed again and bumped their shoulders together. “Well, it could be worse. It could’ve been Klaus.”

Daemon shuddered. Ugh.

“What could have been me?”

Ric’s laughter died with the same noise a popping balloon would make and Damon lazily twirled on his bar stool once, twice, thrice, – he may be a bit tipsy already – before planting both hands on the counter and staring at the newcomer.

Klaus stared at them expectantly, leaning his elbow on the counter.

“Who said we were talking about you?”

The hybrid furrowed his brows. “He just said my name.” Then he waved at Ric’s direction. “Nice to officially meet you, mate, by the way. I don’t think I’ve ever thanked you for the loan.”

“We’ve already met.” Ric rolled his eyes, returning to his drink.

“Have we? I suppose I forgot,” Klaus turned to stare at him again. Damon gave him his best dumb smile. “So? What were we talking about?”

“There are many Klauseses around.”

Ric snorted at his words while Klaus cocked an unimpressed eyebrow. Damon’s smile only grew.

“Alright, fine.” Klaus smacked his lips. “Keep your little secrets.” He sat beside Damon, and of course, made sure their arms were touching.

Ric side-eyed him.

Their hang out had obviously been busted by a nosy hybrid. Klaus paid no mind to the awkwardness.

The silence that was once comfortable, became tense and it made Ric subtly squirm in his seat, clearly feeling threatened by Klaus' presence. Damon didn't particularly care whether or not Klaus was there, him being near earshot only meant they wouldn't be able to talk about a couple of things.

But since Klaus wanted so much to involve himself in their conversation, Damon would use the chance to lend his friend a helping hand, and clean the path for Stefan as well.

"How's Jenna, by the way? I forgot to ask." He widened his eyes at Ric.

Ric was a smart man, and he caught on quickly.

"She's still not leaving bed, most of the days." Ric answered in a low, dejected tone that sounded so real Damon was actually impressed.

He could sense Klaus paying attention from the corner of his eye. Damon took another sip from his drink to stop himself from smirking.

He should get brother of the year for this one.

"I saw Jeremy at school the other day. He seemed to be holding on well, considering everything."

"He's trying to put on a brave face." Ric glared at Klaus, who smiled sheepishly in response. "But I don't know how long it will last, she was his sister, after all."

There was silence between them again, but this time Ric's eyes gleamed with artfulness.

Damon would feel bad for deceiving the hybrid if it weren't for the fact Klaus was trying to bring his son's worst nightmares back to life. Not to say of the growing danger to vampires, which, hoorah, included him and his brother.

"So, since when are you two friends?"

Damon worked through his memories. "Since we killed Elijah?"

“Is that when you started considering me a friend?” Ric gawked at him. “What about all the dinners at Jenna's?”

Damon got dragged to them by Stefan. He didn't know if his brother letting it escape that Alaric was a vampire hunter was a barely hidden attempt at manipulating him to come and keep an eye on the man, but it worked regardless. Damon went on every dinner, if only to pay attention to the ones that Stefan allowed close.

It had been a hard few weeks, having his introverted little brother trick him into socializing, but once Henrik befriended Elena, Caroline, Jeremy and Bonnie, he was against two pairs of puppy eyes and the loss had been guaranteed.

At some point, Damon's awkwardness and paranoia wore off – Stefan’s little friends were harmless. Well, maybe not Bonnie, but the rest of them were like bunnies on a farm.

Ric, however, took him longer to trust.

“Aw, you've considered me a friend since then?” He teased, not wanting to admit he felt bad for only starting to trust Ric so much later.

“You're an ass, I don't know why I put up with you.”

“My charming personality, many skills and my pretty face, obviously.” He smirked.

Ric huffed, picking up his messenger bag. “After that, I’m leaving. You guys have fun.”

Damon didn’t bother asking him to stay, he knew Ric was not really upset with him and was instead using his teasing as an excuse to leave.

“Somehow I get the sense he left because of me.”

Damon was really unimpressed by the smug look on the blonde’s face.

“Gee, you don’t say.”

Klaus sent him a *look* for his sarcastic tone.

Damon didn’t care for it in the slightest.

The hybrid tried squaring up, his gaze piercing, but seemed to come to

the conclusion Damon wasn't about to feel intimidated.

"So," Damon took a sip of his drink, pretending he hadn't tensed up when Klaus dragged the word out and leaned even closer into his personal space. There it came, the reason why he was approached in the first place. "I've heard something about you being friends with the sheriff. Introduce us."

Damon narrowed his eyes at the order. As if.

"Whatever you want with Liz," He smiled falsely. "Don't."

"Fine, I don't need your help to approach her." Klaus waved his hand carelessly. "But I will need you to tell me who exactly were the men that attacked us last night."

Yeah, that's it. Damon was done.

He pushed his drink away and made to get up, but an arm around his shoulder held him in place, and Klaus's face got so close to his own that their noses almost touched. "You're not leaving without answering me."

Damon forcibly kept his heartbeat calm, and made a show of sighing out loud.

"What do you want me to say? They came from a family of vampire hunters, and I killed some of them years ago, so they were looking for retribution. Wasn't it obvious?"

"And why, pray tell, did you leave your mess to us?"

The lie came out easily.

"I was attacking their place, obviously. I only left Henrik with you in case some of them left to attack me while I was there."

Klaus kept looking at his eyes, searching for a sign of him lying. Damon simply stared back.

The grip on his shoulder tightened. "If I find out you are lying, I will shove a coquetel of vervain down your throat until you throw up, and then I will make you lick the vomit as well. I don't care what Henrik thinks about it."

Damon mulled over the threat. It was a bit disgusting, sure, but whatever.

“Sure.”

“Good talk.” Klaus tapped him in the back with a smile, mood changing just like that. “I’ll leave you all alone to finish this bottle of yours and go back to sulking over your feelings for my brother.”

Damon froze, before forcibly relaxing his shoulders. Klaus watched him like a hawk, gleeful.

Damon glared at him. What a fucking dick.

“Didn’t father dearest teach you not to eavesdrop?”

It was Klaus’ turn to glare, and Damon smiled up at him innocently.

At that moment, the sound of the Grill’s door opening and closing caught his attention.

“-and it was a knife to my back not having you-”

“Caroline, *please* . I really need to start my shift!” Damon tilted his head slightly, watching Caroline and Matt Donovan at the other side of the bar.

The second Donovan left to enter the kitchen, Caroline’s eyes flew to his.

Damon looked away, giving her his back.

Please, no. Please.

He heard her high heels approaching him in quick strides, and stared miserably at the counter.

It was the worst possible moment.

A dark green bag was put on the counter next to him. Caroline let out a long sigh, the stool by his left squeaking while she sat on it. He showed Klaus three of his fingers, folding them as he counted: 3…2… 1…

Klaus grinned when Caroline started her tirade. “You won’t believe what happened today.”

You won’t believe what Tyler said to me , she had called to tell him yesterday at night – and Damon wasn’t even sure who dared to give her his number. When he asked why he was the chosen one for that

particular conversation, she told him she'd already talked to Bonnie and did not like her advice. Damon had to listen to her werewolf-vampire teenage drama for five long minutes before she finally remembered she was supposed to breathe while talking and he took the chance to tell her to break the hell up with the dog, and *I'll talk to you later, Caroline.*

You won't believe what is going on between Bonnie and Jeremy, he was told two days ago.

It seemed there was little Damon believed.

Ever since three days ago, when Damon went with Liz to save her from Doctor William, Caroline apparently reached the conclusion that Damon was now her friend, which, seriously, did he look like he went around hanging out with teenagers?

"-and she said my idea sucked. *Sucked* . I mean-" Caroline continued, scoffing in disbelief. "Who does she think she is? And even worse, everyone agreed that her idea was best and I spent *two entire weeks* working on this project – I want a coke, Colin, thanks – *two weeks,* and now it's gonna be for nothing because Mrs. Perfection got everyone to pick her idea over mine!"

"What idea?" Klaus asked.

Caroline stopped to breathe, and her entire demeanor changed when she saw the hybrid. "Hi, sorry, I didn't know you were with Damon." She sat up straighter, curling a finger around her hair, before catching herself in the act and deciding to extend her hand to Klaus instead. "I'm Caroline."

What was happening?

Klaus smirked, holding Caroline's hand and bringing it to his lips. "Pleasure to meet you, love."

Damon wrinkled his nose. Ew.

To his further disgust, Caroline's pupils dilated, her eyes lingering before she abruptly looked away.

Double ew.

"So," Klaus leaned against him to get closer to her. "What was your idea, love?"

Damon turned his head towards Klaus, and the hybrid's eyes were gleaming.

It was like watching a particularly violent car crash.

On his left, Caroline swallowed, a small flush to her cheeks. "A ball from the sixties."

Colin appeared, leaving the girl's coke on the counter before rushing to the other side of the counter.

Caroline pulled her hand away from Klaus', taking a large sip of her drink, and there was a small smile on her lips when she glanced at the hybrid again.

Damon wondered if he should warn Liz. And whether or not Ric deserved to hear the newest gossip after making fun of his growing interest in Elijah.

"But now I'm going to have to prepare a ball for the twenties, cause of course no one cares if I've already found a beautiful dress from my grandma's in the attic, and now I'm going to have to have a dress custom made, which sucks cause everyone knows it's best when it's really vintage – I swear if she gets in my way one more time I'll snap her neck."

Damon would tell Stefan as soon as he got to his car.

"And who would that wretched hag be?" Klaus asked.

He should tell Elijah as well, surely he would feel the same amount of horrified amusement slash disgust Damon was feeling.

"A new girl. Even her name is too much; Rebekah Mikaelson. Who the hell is called Rebekah with a -kah?"

Damon snorted into his glass, turning his entire body towards Klaus to see his reaction.

Oh, he could hear the christmas trumpets playing, this was the best day of his life.

The hybrid, somehow, seemed even more amused than him.

"What's so funny?"

"Caroline," Damon rolled on his stool, his smirk growing. "Meet Klaus

Mikaelson."

He'd never seen the blonde look so shocked. It lasted all of three seconds before her brows furrowed in anger. "You. You hurt Bonnie."

The mood immediately turned somber.

"And killed Elena, yes." Damon sobered up. It wasn' as funny anymore – the girl had the loosest tongue he'd ever seen on anyone, and it wouldn't do for her to spill the beans now.

Caroline frowned at him for the slightest second before the widening of his eyes gave her the hint that Klaus was to think that Elena was dead, for her friend's own safety.

They really needed to get out now.

"Look, it was nice seeing you, and all, Klaus, but I have to bring this one home."

Caroline let him drag her away, but they didn't take even three steps away before Klaus' voice got her to stop. "It was a pleasure to meet you, Caroline."

"Yeah, the pleasure was all yours." She spat, causing the smirk on Klaus' face to die.

Damon was actually a bit impressed.

The girl remained silent until he drove them around the corner.

" *What* were you doing with him, Damon?"

"Keeping a good neighbor policy, blondie. Do you remember the saying that goes," Damon moved one of his fingers the way a conductor would his baton. "Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer."

Caroline huffed, crossing her arms.

"You two seemed quite chummy for you to consider him an enemy."

That's because he didn't. Klaus stood right in the middle between Damon's mostly neutral, but overall good terms, and enemy chart – but she didn't need to know that.

"And that's called acting." He said, as he parked in front of her house.

“Now get the hell out of my car.” He waited until she closed the door to lean on his window. “And try to avoid finding trouble with Rebekah, don’t trust the dumb blonde smile.”

Her reaction was exactly the one he was looking for.

Caroline’s face scrunched up. “I am blonde as well, Damon!”

“Oh,” He grinned. “So you are.”

He could still hear her cursing him as he turned left on her street, driving straight home

Damon was halfway into the Pension’s grounds when he saw a silhouette waiting in front of he house. A familiar silhouette he recognized the second his eyes found it.

Elijah.

Chapter End Notes

no Elijah this chapter but we get Damon bonding with Finn! (or did he?)
AND MY PEOPLE, IT IS HERE, THE SHIP THAT NEVER WAS: KLAROLINE AAAAAAH
and YES, they WILL be together in this <3
also, Ric, Klaus and Damon drinking in the bar was so fun to watch lol

Chapter 16: Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH FOR THE COMMENTS, GUYS
＜333333333
Buckle up.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Are you satisfied with the view, Elijah?!”

“Not particularly, no.”

Niklaus snarled at him, and the heart of one of the transitioning werewolves hit the tree with the same sound meat did when it hit the counter.

Elijah watched, impassively, while his brother raged, starting to scream in anger, as he was bound to do when he didn’t get what he wanted.

He stepped over the tree’s roots, approaching his brother to take a better look at the carnage. The ground around them was littered with the corpses of dead werewolves, their faces bleeding from their eyes, nose, ears and mouth.

It was an ugly, deplorable sight, and although he felt horrible for it, Elijah couldn’t be more glad to see it.

This failure, as Niklaus insisted on calling it, was the highest blessing he could’ve received; now he knew for certain his brother had no way of creating new hybrids if he didn’t have a Petrova Doppelgänger’s blood.

For that, he would give Elena Gilbert a choice; become a vampire, or leave Mystic Falls for good to live far away from there, preferably in an uninhabited place. He didn’t care what Stefan Salvatore thought about it, and Elijah was confident in his capacity to convince Damon it was the best option for all of them.

Niklaus could not be allowed to create hybrids. If his brother had an army of them, the world would burn, and Elijah did not care if Niklaus convinced himself he was doing this for Henrik, or if he wanted hybrids so he wouldn’t be the only one of his kind; it was not

happening.

He only wished his brother would stop causing the death of innocents while on it.

“Did you make your presence known so you could gloat?” Niklaus spat, storming out towards the werewolf camp he invaded. Elijah took his time to follow him – now that Niklaus had acknowledged him, he was sure his brother wasn’t about to try and run away.

“Contrary to what you may think, Niklaus.” Elijah opened a box that was lying above a large picnic table, taking a peek inside. It was filled with threads youngsters used to make bracelets. “I do not enjoy watching you in distress.”

“Forgive me, brother, if I don’t believe you.”

Elijah didn’t bother with any comebacks, Niklaus could think what he wanted.

“It appears the advice you’ve received from that witch hasn’t worked.”

Elijah didn’t know if the blonde woman had lied straight to his brother’s face, which would be an impressive feat, or if she really believed that forcing the transitioning werewolves to feed on a human high on Niklaus’ blood was the solution.

“That disgrace for the witch’s species lied to me. She’ll get what’s coming for her.”

Elijah heard a snapping noise, but turned around too late; a broken branch was pushed into his stomach, the area around it flaring with pain.

He bent down with a grunt, cursing his stupidity for taking his eyes off his brother for even a second.

Niklaus grabbed his shoulder, meeting his pained gaze. “Stop. Following me.”

He didn't even have the decency to take the stake out before walking away. While Niklaus got inside his car, closing it with unnecessary violence, Elijah curled his hands around the piece of wood, pulling it out.

Niklaus wasted no second in driving away.

Now positively irritated, Elijah walked to the nearest, most functioning-looking car and broke the window, entering it and breaking the panel before connecting the ignition wires to start the car.

His life would be so much easier if his siblings used their heads instead of being driven by their emotions.

Why was it that Niklaus found so difficult to understand this desire of his for equals was madness? A child would be more reasonable.

Elijah didn't know where his brother learned to be so bullheaded.

To his relief, Niklaus wasn't too far when he finally caught up to him, and Elijah leaned back against his car's seat, keeping himself two cars behind his brother's at all times while he readied himself for a possibly long drive.

He was right, and they crossed states non-stop until Chicago, where his brother parked in front of a rustic bar.

Elijah didn't bother entering it, remaining inside his car.

Let Niklaus build a sense of security while he listened in, that way he'd find out more.

The witch behind the counter played along to his brother's charms, flirting back, and Elijah began checking his messages, only half paying attention to their conversation.

Until the witch mentioned Rebekah's necklace. The necklace Elijah knew now belonged to Elena Gilbert.

The heat was on for their lies about the girl's death.

"Find the necklace, and you'll have your answers."

Niklaus left the bar not long after that, and Elijah watched him leave, already texting Rebekah.

This time Elijah didn't follow his brother while he drove away, and he watched as the car made a turn and disappeared from sight.

The bar was completely empty, the witch had sent everyone away the moment Niklaus arrived. Elijah closed the car's door quietly, crossing

the street slowly.

The witch's eyes grew fearfully wide when she turned around to face him when he entered the bar, locking the door behind him.

"I see you know who I am."

"Elijah Mikaelson." She breathed out, swallowing dry. "You're here to kill me."

"Yes." He acquiesced.

The woman took a step back, then stopped and took a deep breath, as if resigning herself to her fate. "I have a daughter and a granddaughter… you will not touch them."

Steps rounded the ceiling above them, and Elijah heard the heartbeats upstairs. An adult, and one baby.

"Does your daughter have the means to give my brother what he's looking for?"

"She's not keen on following the witch path. She lives as a human."

"Then no harm will come to her."

The woman released a shaking breath. "I knew my end would one day come for meddling with the business of you vampires."

Elijah had nothing to say to that, and he was quick to run to the witch and break her neck, going for the less painful way – it wasn't her fault she held the answers Niklaus was looking for.

Carefully, he lowered her body into the ground, remaining crouched next to her for a few minutes in grief for the innocent life he took.

DAMON

He stopped a few feet away, putting both of his hands on the pockets of his jacket, and tried not to pay attention to the fact Elijah was using his black suit and shirt combination again, so alike to the one he was

wearing when Damon first met him.

“When did you come back?” Damon glanced at the yellow store bag on the original’s hand.

“I’ve just arrived.” Elijah smiled. “You look well.”

“Did you expect me to look bad?”

“Have you ever looked bad?”

Damon grinned. “I’m biased.” Elijah lowered his head, chuckling under his breath. “How was your time following Dr. Frankenstein on his mission to create his little monsters?”

“Incredibly tedious, but Niklaus did find out about Rebekah’s necklace, which is now in Elena’s hand.”

Damon frowned. “Why does Elena have your sister’s necklace?”

“That is what I intend to find out.” Elijah then extended the bag in his hand. “Here, I brought this for you.”

Damon eyed it. A gift?

He didn’t think he’d ever received one that wasn’t from Henrik on father’s day, or on his birthday, not since he died, at least..

Damon accepted the bag with a raised eyebrow, and took a peek inside. It was a black rectangle, packed to perfection with a lace on top and everything.

He took out the package, turning it around in his hands, but couldn’t for the life of him figure out what it was.

He hoped it wasn’t a tablet, he hated those things.

“What is it?”

“Open it.”

Damon glanced at him suspiciously, and started unwrapping the gift, careful not to rip the paper..

A book, a black, hard covered one with a beautiful design.

Damon didn’t recognize the title.

“To kill a mockingbird.” He read out loud the white letters that formed the title.

Elijah’s eyes were piercing into his own. “I’m sure you’ve probably read it already, but it’s an all black covered edition. I figured you’d like it.”

He didn’t even know what to do with the knowledge Elijah had noticed he liked to read, Damon didn’t tend to read in public, but his heart fluttered in his chest.

“I haven’t read it.” Damon turned the book around, reading the synopsis. At the end of it, a small statement declaring it one of the most beautiful classics ever written. It sounded interesting. “How did you know I liked to read?”

“I found one of your books on the couch, hidden behind the cushions. It had your name on it.”

“Stalker.” Damon joked, smiling now. “But thanks.”

Elijah tilted his head, taking a step closer to him. Damon couldn’t take his eyes away from him, and instead of becoming alert, his body warmed up.

“You’re welcome.” Elijah’s smile was like a magnet, pulling Damon in. He didn’t quite understand how the man could look so sexy without doing much at all, and their faces were so close that if Damon were to lean in just a bit their lips would meet. Were his lips as soft as they looked? “I believe we are being observed.”

Damon immediately looked up. When he realized he was caught, Henrik’s eyes widened and he reared back so fast Damon was sure he’d fell backwards from the window seat, a low ‘shit, ow’ coming from the room he was in.

When Damon glanced at Elijah again, the man was already a few feet away from him.

“I have to go, my sister is likely curious to find out more about the importance of her necklace.”

“Wait.” Damon went after him. “You won’t tell her about Elena, will you?”

Rather abruptly, he found himself pressed against the car, and

although they were the same height, Elijah now seemed taller. If it were any other person, Damon would surely be readying himself to attack, but as it was all he could think of was trying his best to stop his cock from hardening even further.

Fuck.

Elijah was talking, Damon could see his mouth moving and his Adam's apple rising on his throat, but he didn't hear anything.

He shook himself out of it, trying to concentrate on what Elijah was saying.

"–family as well, and I assume you'd be quite upset if your brother lost his girlfriend."

"What?"

It felt like his breath had been punched out of his chest when he saw the little side smile on Elijah's mouth from that proximity.

"I will not tell her anything." Elijah explained, indulgently. and Damon couldn't resist it, knew it was insane even as he did it, but he felt completely out of control, his face getting closer to Elijah's as if in slow motion – even worse, he'd lost control of his heartbeat, the organ beating at a strong, fast rate.

His eyes were closing on their own, but not completely, and Damon froze halfway, doubt creeping at him from all sides suddenly. He met Elijah's gaze, trying to point out whether or not his actions would be well received, when Elijah's eyes darkened, his lips falling into a line.

"Someone is coming."

Damon blinked, his senses returning to him at full force. He could hear the engine of a car approaching. "Shit."

Fuck, the delivery. Damn him for skipping grocery shop day.

He glanced up at the window from where Henrik was earlier snooping at them, but saw no sign of his son.

Elijah stepped back, reaching for the door's handle. The lights of the delivery were already showing from behind the trees.

"I will see you tomorrow, Damon."

“Yes.”

Damon watched him leave, replaying the events of the last couple of minutes over and over again even as he paid the highschooler for the delivery.

Fuck.

“I don’t understand the interest humans have in this,” Rebekah said in disgust, eyeing the snacks on display while they passed down the aisle.

Damon hummed in agreement, pushing the shopping cart ahead as he went, a list of missing supplies on one of his hands, but stopped when he heard the familiar crunchy noise of snack packaging coming from behind him.

Hell no.

Henrik smiled up at him cutely. On the cart, four different types of snacks lied unassumingly. “Please!”

“Henrik, no.”

“Please, dad, I’ve never tried these ones!”

Damon sighed, looking from the kid’s pleading face to the cart. Henrik had eaten a lot of these unhealthy industrial food garbage the past few days while going out to visit his siblings.

“Fine.” He huffed. “But you can only eat them on the weekend.”

Henrik ran ahead. “Okay!”

“You’re a pushover.” Rebekah said pompously, reminding him of her presence.

“I saw you cut off his bread crusts.” Damon called her out. “Henrik doesn’t even mind them.”

She turned her head away, but he saw the smile she was trying to hide.

He was waiting to find out why she’d decided to come with them –

there was nothing more boring than going grocery shopping –, but she'd left Matt Donovan standing alone in front of the Grill to follow them after Henrik went to hug her on their way to the market.

"So," She started nonchalantly, taking out a ketchup bottle to look at. Damon's attention was partially on Henrik, who was somewhere near the juice aisle, three corridors away, but he wasn't oblivious to the way she was watching him from the corner of her eyes. "You should watch out for Kol. He isn't happy, and he doesn't trust you."

Tough luck for her dick of a brother, though. Henrik had told him that he was right, and that he'd actually met Kol almost a century ago. Damon hadn't been exactly expecting any retribution for a thing that happened so long ago, but now that she spoke on it, he ought to remember that for Kol it hadn't been that long at all.

And that brought out another question; why was Rebekah trying to help him, if that was what she was doing? He didn't believe for a second she liked him – they barely knew each other –, and even if she did, Kol was still her brother.

He stopped the cart, giving her his full attention. "Why are you telling me about this?"

Rebekah's whole demeanor changed, her face becoming completely serious, and her eyes gained a steely glint to them. For once Damon found himself sure he was seeing the part of herself she hid underneath that snobby but sweet, shallow girl she always portrayed herself as.

"I like how things are now. Henrik's happy, Elijah's happy. I am happy." She stopped inches away from his face, once again proving that the Mikaelsons as a whole had no concept of personal space, with the exception of Finn, but Damon wouldn't rule him out just yet. "And I find myself wanting to trust you – you have yet to give me reason to think otherwise."

Her voice gained a cutting edge at the last sentence, a threat hiding underneath, and while Damon didn't appreciate being threatened, he also wasn't too offended by it.

He wasn't about to threaten her back, though. Threats were warnings, and Damon liked the element of surprise.

So he nodded – what else was there to do – and was about to pick a couple of milk carton boxes when he heard a heartbeat he knew all

too well.

Stefan.

Damon frowned, glancing in the direction the heartbeat was coming from, concentrating on it.

What was Stefan doing there? Wasn't he supposed to be with Elena in her parent's creepy cabin in the woods?

Then, he noticed a second heartbeat, one he took longer to place a name at, but when he did, Damon clenched his teeth. For fuck's sake, Stefan.

He shoved the list in Rebekah's hand, stepping around her to walk towards the exit. "Can you help Henrik get the rest of it? I'll be right back."

"What are you doing? Where are you going?" She called out, confused, but he didn't look back, passing by the aisles as quickly as he could without looking suspicious to the security guards.

The second he was outside, Damon turned right in the empty alley beside the market, taking a quick look at his surroundings to make sure no one was watching him before transforming into a crow, flying after his stupid brother.

In an abandoned parking lot, a block away from the market, Stefan passed a paper to Katherine.

Damon landed on top of an old house, and flapped his wings in annoyance.

His brother was not only hiding secrets from him, but fraternizing with the enemy. It didn't take a genius to understand they were working together to get rid of the originals – Katherine had tried to recruit him, but when Damon hadn't called her back, she tried Stefan. Or maybe the cold hearted bitch did the other way around.

Katherine tilted her head, and Damon leaned closer, trying to read what was written in the note, but even with the crow's vision and his vampire powers, he was still too far.

Should he get closer?

No, they would notice him.

“That’s not much help.” Katherine’s smile sent alarm bells ringing all over his head. She caressed his brother’s arm. Stefan’s eyes coldly followed the movements of her hand. “But I’ll give it a look, and let you know, so long as you promise to do the same.”

Damon shuddered when Katherine’s hand started to slide down Stefan’s chest, and his brother grabbed her hand, pushing it away. “Don’t.”

The woman pouted. “You’re no fun.”

“I am not trying to be.” Stefan stepped away, walking back into the alley. “Do your part and I’ll do mine.”

Katherine watched Stefan go, and Damon watched her.

Just what the hell were they planning to do? Why wouldn’t Stefan tell him about it? Was his brother dumb enough that he didn't understand the meaning of the word immortal?

He recalled their conversation from days ago, about getting the Mikaelsons to skip town.

If Stefan started a fight with them, the fragile balance they’d managed to find between them and the Mikaelsons would come to an end, and Damon really didn’t want their side to make the first move.

Damon took flight, going back to the market.

He’d have to find a way to nag their little plan at the roots before they messed everything up, and Stefan got himself killed.

Also, maybe it was time to teach his brother a lesson over what it meant to be a team, and Damon knew exactly how.

ELIJAH

Damon didn’t even wait for him to knock before opening the front door, pressing a finger against his mouth to ask for silence.

Elijah could hear Henrik and Jeremy playing video games inside.

He frowned, letting Damon push him back with a hand on his chest until the door closed behind them.

Damon grabbed his wrist, pulling him away from the pension and Elijah followed him in silence, eyeing where their fleshes were touching, acutely aware of the fact that Damon had never initiated any physical contact with him up until now.

He wanted to twist his wrist, take Damon's hand into his and wrap their fingers together properly, but he didn't want to push the younger too far, and Elijah didn't think now was the time. There was something urgent about Damon's entire demeanor, his steps a bit too hasty, his heart beating a bit too fast.

They stopped once they were out of hearing range, right in the middle of the woods, and Damon turned to him with a furrowing on his eyebrows that made Elijah want to kiss the formed bump until it easened away.

"My brother is up to something." Damon started, straight to the point as always. Elijah arched an eyebrow, but indulged him. He had thought something serious had happened. "Don't look at me like that, he's been talking with Katherine."

Now that was interesting. Didn't Stefan Salvatore despise her?

"With Katerina? Are you certain it wasn't Mrs. Gilbert?"

"It wasn't Elena." Damon insisted with such certainty he just had to believe in him. But what would Stefan want with Katerina Petrova? Elijah thought she'd be miles away now that Niklaus let her go. "They're onto something, and it involves you and your siblings."

That made him pause, and he stepped closer to Damon, studying him cautiously. Damon's eyes shifted to Elijah's mouth for a millisecond, and for a moment Elijah thought of just pressing him against the nearest tree and leaving the conversation for later.

But he needed to know exactly what made Damon so suspicious, especially when it involved Katerina. "What did you hear?"

"Nothing much. Yet." Damon shook his head slightly, his eyes not leaving Elijah's. "But they're up to something and I will find out."

Elijah felt his lips curl into a side smile. Damon had worried him and pulled him all the way into the woods just because his brother was

meeting with Katerina Petrova, having no proof whatsoever of what they were planning against Elijah or his family?

“Why, Damon.” He slowly lifted his hands, brushing his thumb against the flesh of the younger’s ear. “Are you *worried* about me?”

Damon smiled at his teasing, just as he planned. “Don’t be an ass, Elijah. I’m being serious here.”

“Alright.” He smiled back, and pulled his hand away, putting both of them in his front pockets. “What do you need me for?”

“For now? Just for you to be aware of it.”

Elijah nodded, tilting his head to study him. He didn’t know if Damon realized it, but his eyes gained a different light whenever the strategist in him came into play.

It was one of his most attractive looks.

Damon was planning something, and as usual he didn’t want Elijah to get involved. He was going to allow that, for now, simply because Damon had more chances to find out about the topic of Stefan and Katerina’s meetings without him around to scare her away.

“Whatever it is, I’m not going to let her drag my brother down with her.” Damon continued.

That was him at his most attractive; something in Damon shifted when he was feeling protective, his entire posture changed as the monster in him appeared and confidence took over him. That was the vampire that killed him the day they met, the one who protected Henrik and later welcomed Elijah and his siblings in his home just because he knew it would make Henrik happy.

When he was like this, gone were the occasional awkwardness and the flashes of self doubt that Elijah couldn’t understand the root of. Damon was the most exquisite creature Elijah had ever met, there should be no place for insecurity in him.

A flock of birds landed in a tree close to them.

“You’re a good brother. I wish mine would think first on how their actions affected the rest of us when they acted.”

Damon shrugged, as if what he was doing wasn’t important, wasn’t

something most family members valued the most, and deflected. “I’m sure Rebekah would never cause you any harm.”

Elijah allowed him to change subjects with an easy smile. It would do him no good to pressure Damon into anything, the younger was a runner whenever he felt vulnerable. “My sister would never do it intentionally, it’s true, but in our many years alive Rebekah has given herself over to a series of unsuitable men that brought harm not only to her, but to the rest of our family as well.”

He didn’t blame her for most of them, but Elijah had lost hope of her ever learning to put their safety first in her search for love.

Damon nodded, his face thoughtful. “Well, I’m telling you this is because I plan to stop Stefan, but in the event that I don’t, at least you’ll be aware of what’s coming.” Then he smiled charmingly, and Elijah returned the smile. He already knew what Damon was going to ask, the Salvatore had always been daring, and dare he always would. “So could you make sure none of you will kill my little brother if he fucks up?”

Elijah sighed, his lips twitching.

“I can tell you what, if you are right about Katerina and your brother, and you don’t manage to stop Stefan in this… quest of his.” Elijah started. “I promise you my siblings will bring him no harm.”

There was very little he could deny Damon as of now, after all.

Damon furrowed his eyebrows.

“What about you?”

There .

Elijah knew he would catch on to that.

“Me?” Reaching forwards, he cupped Damon’s jaw, thumb rubbing the soft skin underneath it. “I guess I’ll just have to let you convince me not to, won’t I?”

He watched Damon’s reaction; the flush to his cheeks, the speed of his heartbeat rising, the change in sizes of his pupils.

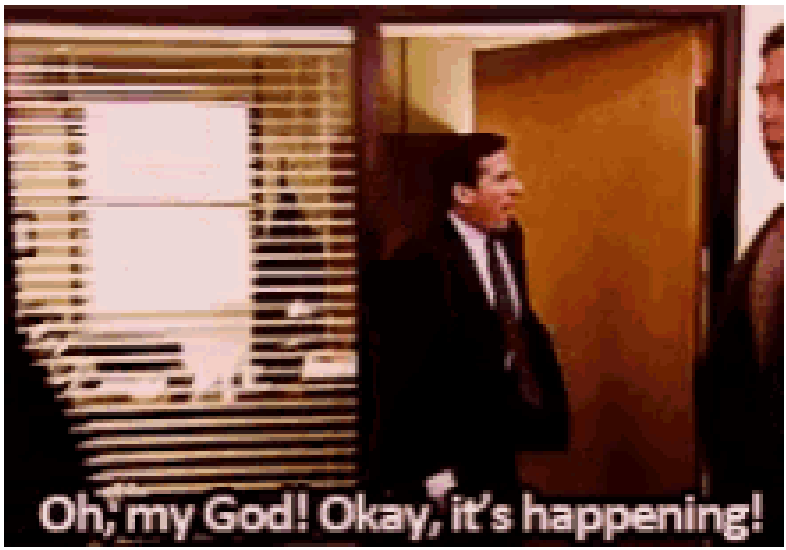
The chirps of the birds seemed far away now.

Though he was watching, searching, *waiting* for it, though he saw

Damon's eyes *finally* widen in realization, Elijah was still surprised when the younger vampire lunged at him, their mouths crashing together.

Chapter End Notes

OMG OKAY IT'S HAPPENING



THEY FINALLY KISSED! AAAAAAAAH! WHEN I TELL I WAS JUMPING FROM MY SEAT AS I WAS EDITING IT AAAH I am so excited!! You guys have no idea how much I wanted to reach this part of the story, the last segment has been written for MONTHS.
Rebekah warning Damon about Kol <3
And what the hell are Katherine and Stefan planning???
What's Damon going to do?
lastly, I am so sorry I changed POV three times in the same chapter lol it had to be done.
Klaus when he finds out that Elijah is keeping his promise of sabotaging him on every way:

The final part of the next chapter is ready, and I can promise this fic will deserve the explicit ranting on it lmao (once I manage to actually write the smut lol)

Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL THE COMMENTS <3
AAAAAAAAAAAAH

See the end of the chapter for more notes

DAMON

Damon didn't even realize his eyes had closed all the way until he found himself pushed against something hard. He opened his eyes again, disoriented, but only had time to understand Elijah was now trapping him between his body and a tree's trunk before his eyes closed by themselves when Elijah kissed him again.

He sighed a little, arching his back to press himself closer so their chests would be touching as well, reaching for Elijah's face so he could adjust the angle of the kiss.

It had been half a century since he last kissed someone, and even longer since he kissed a man, but Damon didn't think it had ever been like this; he was being consumed whole, trying and failing to keep up with the pure intensity of the kiss Elijah was dictating when he couldn't even make sense of all the sensations running all over his body.

His lips were *so soft.* Damon didn't remember lips being that soft.

He panted, a small moan escaping his lips when the hairs of the back of his head were pulled and his body stopped responding to him, becoming hot liquid when he heard Elijah's low, dark chuckle.

Shit.

Damon was melting, he was already bucking his hips forwards like a horny teenager. Elijah's grip on his jaw tightened when Damon searched his lips again, and the original pulled away, his thumb sliding past Damon's bottom lip while his other hand slid lower, leaving a burning trace as it went, the muscles of Damon's chest and abdomen contracting at the touch.

The smell of blood hit his nostrils, but it still shocked him when got a glimpse of the cut in the center of Elijah's hand, and he was about to ask why when his brain abandoned him completely at the feeling of hands curling around his cock. He pulled Elijah closer, holding on for dear life while he rocked his hips against his grip, the blood working as lubricant. It was perfect, it was too slow, it was fast, it was too light.

Being pulled into another kiss that left him panting, Damon reached for Elijah's waistband, not even bothering with his to struggle with his zipper and instead snucking his hand underneath it so he could wrap it around Elijah as well, setting the same pace the original was imposing. He slid the thumb over the cock's head, gathering the pre-cum there, and a rush of pleasure spread through him when Elijah moaned in response to his touch.

It sounded so hot, the moan almost a growl. Damon knew he was being loud, but his noises were all muffled by the beating of his heart that resounded on his ears. He was drowning in pleasure, his free hand going from Elijah's ass to his back, to his shoulder, to his neck. He couldn't decide where to touch.

At some point, he followed Elijah's actions, pressing the nail of his thumb deep enough into the palm of his hand to draw blood so he could stroke him properly, his hand moving almost on its own.

When Elijah pulled back just enough to bite into his bottom lip with his vampire teeth, Damon's eyes rolled to the back of his head, his body convulsing between Elijah and the tree while he came, spurting all over the other's hand.

He sagged, body bending halfway as he trembled, but his hand continued to move furiously onto Elijah's cock, biting into the bare skin revealed by the original's unbuttoned shirt, his own cock twitching valiantly while he listened to Elijah's deep moans, the ancient blood filling his mouth, rich and warm..

Damon looked down, mouth watering when he got the first glimpse of that gorgeous cock, the fat head already red and glistening with a drop of precum. Suddenly he thought of falling into his knees right there and then onto the hard ground and taking Elijah into his mouth, but on the next tug Elijah's grip on his waist tightened, his cock twitched in Damon's hand, and he came as well.

Damon licked his lips, disappointment flowing through him, but the

feeling disappeared when Elijah manhandled him – he loved doing that, Damon was starting to notice – and lifted his head to kiss him again.

Damon didn't even realize he was hard again and rubbing himself against Elijah's thigh in the middle of the kiss until Elijah pulled away to nip onto his jaw and reach down to cup him. Damon twisted his hips away, hissing at the overstimulation, before subconsciously pressed back against Elijah's hand, his body sending him mixed signals.

"That was fast."

Damon cocked an eyebrow. Not his fault he had a short recovery time. "Are you complaining, old man?"

Elijah's lips curled into a small smile, raising his eyes to meet his own, and he pulled him closer by the hips. "I may have heard my siblings would be out till night. Perhaps I should show you what this *old man* can do."

Damon's answering smirk was positively sinful.

Damon panted, lips tingling, and tried to remind his body he didn't really need to breathe while Elijah led the way upstairs, neither of them paying attention to their surroundings after the couple of seconds they spent listening in to any signs of life.

There was no one else home.

Elijah hadn't even closed the door before Damon was pushing him against it and kissing him again.

It was like he couldn't get enough.

Elijah tried to take control of the kiss immediately, and Damon grinned excitedly, pulling back – he had no issues with the original taking control in the bedroom, but there was no fun in him just submitting, was there?

Elijah's eyes darkened deliciously, the dangerous aura Damon found so attractive making an appearance. Damon took in his disheveled state, seeing his hair in disarray for the first time since he met him, and the

sight made him lean for another kiss that Elijah once again tried to dominate, and this time it was harder to find the strength to pull back.

He received a glare for his teasing, and the next time he tried to pull back from the kiss, Elijah switched their positions, and Damon found himself facing the door while the original held him in place by the back of his neck, both his hands now trapped in an unforgiving grip behind his back.

“Behave.”

Fuck.

He almost creamed his pants hearing that word, spoken in Elijah's bedroom voice, which was something Damon hadn't known existed and yet couldn't believe he went so far in life before finding out about it.

He tested the hold on his arms, but he couldn't budge. Somehow, despite all the reasons why that should scare him, arousal pooled in his gut.

Holy fuck.

Elijah bit into his nape, sucking just a bit, and Damon's head spun around at the wave of pleasure-pain that it caused, a small and he bit his bottom lip to keep himself from moaning out loud when Elijah licked the pair of punctures.

He went lax against the door, closing his eyes while he panted. Damon had always been a sucker for blood sharing.

Elijah hummed from behind him, pressing a kiss to the closing bite, before releasing his hold on Damon's wrists, his hands now free pulling on Damon’s belt and lowering his pants. Damon kicked the fabric away, reaching back to pull Elijah into another kiss, wrapping his arm around his neck to keep him in place while Elijah palmed his ass.

“Stop teasing.” He growled, pulling on Elijah’s hair, and told himself Elijah’s chuckle did not make him shiver.

In a blink, the back of knees hit the bed, Elijah giving him a little push that had him falling onto the mattress with a small sound of surprise. He was about to sit when his world turned around, and Damon found

himself now facing the bed. He twisted his head around, his heart jumping a couple of beats while he tried to gather his bearings, but Elijah's chest settled above him, and Damon let his head fall against the pillow.

He heard a shuffle above him, Elijah's weight leaving him, and he took the chance to get rid of his boxers. It had been too long – Damon wasn't about to waste any time anymore.

Elijah's body covered his again, and Damon hummed appreciatively at the warmth, closing his eyes when he felt the touch of something sticky on his back.

Finally. Thank fuck.

He gripped onto the sheets tightly, and turned his head to bite into the pillowcase, going slack against the bed when Elijah pushed a finger inside.

"I hadn't imagined you'd be so eager."

The words went straight to his groin, a drop of precum sliding out of the head of his cock. Damon opened his legs even further, twisting closer, and it took him an inhumane amount of effort to sound cocky as he teased. "So you've been thinking about this."

Elijah huffed, and Damon didn't need to look to know he was containing an eyeroll, but he barely had time to feel smug – Elijah added another finger, curling them in a way that had him pressing against Damon's prostate dead on.

Damon swallowed, mouth going slack, and he sank against the mattress.

His fingers were so long, and the cold, silver sunlight ring in his middle finger made Damon shiver every time it brushed against his rim. Damon started to rock his hips back against Elijah's hands, his head growing fuzzy by the minute, but despite how good it felt, it wasn't enough.

Elijah seemed to agree, for when Damon twisted his head to look at him and tell him to get on with it already, the original's eyes were almost entirely black, narrowed in a look of concentration, and he pulled his fingers out, his hands gripping at his hips and holding them up. For the second time that day, Damon was speechless, his eyes rolling back inside his head while Elijah slowly pushed inside and he

shoved his face into the pillow, his hold on the sheets tightening. He was surrounded by all sides, full to the brim as every drag of Elijah's cock brought alive parts of himself he'd long forgotten, alighting him from inside.

A touch to his small back brought him back to the present. "Can I?"

Damon nodded his head, biting onto his bottom lip so as not to make an embarrassment of himself, but it was a lost cause when he felt himself shudder at the first thrust, just as slow as when he was first putting in, and Damon opened his mouth to complain he wasn't expecting him to be vanilla, of all things.

His mouth stayed just like that, a gasp leaving his mouth as Elijah set up a punishing pace, his hips rolling with a strength and speed that left Damon seeing stairs, allowing him no reprieve, no time to think, or to do, but hold on.

He knew he was speaking, knew he was saying things he had no control of, but that only seemed to add fuel to Elijah's thrusts, his hand finding its place to the back of Damon's head, holding him in place as he went. He couldn't even move, the grip on his hips keeping him in place, stopping him from even rocking back.

Damon's toes curled, he was already drooling against the pillow as he tried his best not to hit his head against the headboard. Elijah was a fucking freak.

He should've known – all that uptight act of his… the quiet ones were the *worst*.

As if to prove him right, Elijah leaned down, biting into his shoulder plate. He *felt* Elijah's teeth perfuring his skin, his teeth longer than a normal vampire's, the punctures pulsating in aching pleasure.

"You like it when I bite you." Elijah stated, mouth still pressed into Damon's skin, and Damon felt vindicated by the fact that at the very least his voice sounded stranded.

The pleasure rose so fast his orgasm took him by surprise, bursting out of him with a strength that left him gasping for breath, and he would have fallen onto the bed if it weren't for the hands holding him in place. He shuddered weakly when Elijah pulled out, oversensitive, and before he could make his tongue work to tell him to keep going, or get a hand into that gorgeous cock of his, Elijah grunted from behind him, and he smelt the recognizable scent of cum before it even hit the small

of his back.

Yeah, a fucking freak.

Damon chuckled breathlessly, muffling his laughter into the pillow even as Elijah told him he didn't understand what was so amusing.

"So, what now?" He asked, trying for casualness, his thumb drawing invisible shapes on Elijah's knee lazily.

They'd been in the bathtub for about twenty minutes already, and Damon was not only comfortable, but also drowsy, the post-sex relaxment still wrapped over him.

"Now I'll tell my siblings about us."

Us.

Damon bit his inner cheeks to stop himself from smiling like an idiot.

"Right."

He started patting Elijah's chest with one of his feet, just for the sake of it, and Elijah grabbed it, starting to press circles into the sole with his thumbs.

Damon hissed when he pressed too tight into a spot, and Elijah quickly stopped putting too much pressure onto it. He relaxed back against the bathtub, his eyes not leaving the original as he admired the sight of him shirtless shamelessly.

And to know that he was naked under the bathtub water…

"I am not interested in one night stands."

Damon smirked. "Yeah?"

Elijah reached his hand lower to touch Damon's inner thigh. Like a switch being turned on, Damon's cock twitched, and if it were anyone else Damon would have said Elijah looked smug as he rested his hand there, and Damon knew if it weren't for the fact he'd already come twice in the past hour, he'd be growing harder again.

Damon was starting to get the idea that Elijah could be a bit of a dick,

a side of him that had been kept well hidden until now, mostly.

Damon liked it, perhaps a bit too much.

“I'm not one for one night stands either.”

Elijah's hand left his thigh to grab onto his hand. “I am going to court you–”

“I'm not a girl.” Damon cut him off, dryly.

“I am aware.” Eijah dug his thumb into his foot with his free hand for the interruption. Damon hissed, reaching for his poor abused foot, but Elijah stopped him with a warning look. “We Vikings don't differentiate between sex.”

“That’s some weird-ass culture.” He joked.

“I am being serious, Damon.”

The light mood between them sombering.

“I know.” He conceded, at last, turning his hand to intertwine their hands together as a silent apology.

It was just strange – baring his feelings like that. He wasn't used to doing it with someone that wasn't Henrik, not even Stefan, and the last two people he opened his heart to betrayed him in a way that took decades for him to recover.

Elijah held his gaze, his eyes searching, and Damon, in a display of trust, didn't look away. He didn’t know what it was about Elijah that made him willing to try and give a chance to this… whatever it was that was happening between them, but a part of him still revolted against it, screaming that it wasn’t safe.

Damon pushed the voice to the back of his head.

At last, Elijah nodded, his eyes shifting to the ceiling, and in the silence that followed Damon grew so comfortable he ended up taking a catnap.

He was shaken awake in what felt like a second later, and offered a pair of clothes. Elijah was already dressed, wearing a dark gray t-shirt and sweatpants as well.

Damon stepped out of the bathtub, his movements sluggish, and he

almost tripped onto his own legs while putting on the dark blue sweatpants. If it weren't for Elijah steadying him, he would have fallen down.

"I think I may have drunk a bit too much from you." Elijah sounded regretful, of all things, as if by doing that he hadn't just made Damon cum his brains out less than an hour ago. "You should drink some blood."

"Later." He yawned, walking out of the bathroom to sit down on the bed. "I'm tired."

His senses changed so fast it left him disorientated.

One second he was in bed, falling asleep next to Elijah after checking up with Henrik, and in the next he was in a dream so vivid it was like he was reliving his memories.

"Children do so well with technology, don't they?" The woman behind the train station balcony smiled kindly at him. "He must be really smart to already know how to read."

"He is." Damon looked down at Henrik, stroking his dark hair. The five years old leaned back against him, nestling himself further into his arms. Henrik's full attention was on the phone in his hands as he expertly looked for the SMS containing the code for their 8 pm. ticket train to Sweden.

Damon thought he would receive weirder looks for having a child take care of that part, but people in the twenty first century were much less intrusive and judgemental than before.

"Here!" Henrik cried out, raising the phone as if it were the answer to their prayers. Damon kissed the crown of his head, and waited for the woman to check on their passages, looking around the room to make sure he didn't recognize any of the faces around them.

It wouldn't do for them to be followed.

In a blink, it was day, and Damon was in front of the colorful building of the kindergarten he tried to enroll Henrik at so he could socialize with other children his age.

“Daddy!” Henrik screamed, voice breaking midway into his screechy tone. “No! Daddy!”

Damon looked back, watching as the boy was carried inside the school.

“It's normal, every kid has a breakdown in their first days.”

Damon nodded at the principal’s words, though he had no idea what ‘breakdown’ meant, but he could only resist Henrik’s calls for another thirty seconds before stopping in his tracks and going back to get his son back, deciding to just teach him at home the way he himself was taught.

Abruptly, the memory changed.

“No! I don't want the Bob, I want Pat’ick.” Henrik pointed at the pink figurine from the cartoon he so enjoyed watching at the television, lying behind the transparent counter that worked as a display.

He'd opened his red and yellow cardboard package and found the annoying sponge one.

The male employee shook his head and swallowed convulsively, looking around nervously before meeting Damon’s eyes. He was tanspirating, his forehead glistening with cold sweat, and his heartbeat beat fast and loud in Damon’s ears. The smell of terror made Damon scrunch up his nose. Finally, the man spoke. “You don't get to choose, it's sorted by luck.”

Henrik turned to him, confused by the denial, his puppy eyes big. “Daddy, wanna Pat’ick!”

Damon stared deep into the other man’s eyes. The lightning of that place was starting to give him a headache, and the restaurant was too open. Not to mention the walls that had huge windows in each one of them, letting everyone who walked by the sidewalk see who was inside.

They’d been there for too long already. It wasn’t safe.

“Give him the Patrick one. Now.”

They got out of that stupid restaurant with the Patrick figurine.

Damon frowned, getting the sense something was wrong, but he

couldn't figure out why.

The memory changed one more time, and he found himself in a college library.

Damon watched attentively as the girl, Carla, used the mouse to circle the hour at the left inferior corner of the screen. 2 am, it read, with the date beneath it.

“See? Easy.”

It wasn't easy at all.

She passed the mouse to him and motioned for him to try.

Damon squinted his eyes at the computer's screen, frowning as the pointer in the screen moved faster than it had when *she* was the one doing it.

She chuckled, covering his hand with hers and he almost jumped from his seat, pulling his hand away and turning to face her completely, veins already showing around his eyes.

“Sorry.” Carla pulled her hand away, frowning, but he had told her not to fear, and so she didn’t. “I was only trying to show you how to move it.”

Damon studied her for a sign of deceit. There was none.

His hand flexed once, then twice and he listened in for a sign of any other heartbeats in the college library.

When nothing came up, he relaxed. “Alright.”

Henrik suddenly perked up in his lap. “Mickey!” The boy cheered, reaching for the mouse, and dragging the pointer expertly to where the image of Disney's Mickey Mouse was standing at the corner of the screen. He was being louder now, like a normal child, and though sometimes Damon wished he’d gather less attention to them with his tone of voice, he couldn’t find the strength in him to tell the toddler to be quieter, not when even now he remembered his father’s harsh words as he demanded the same.

“Would you look at that? Henrik is a little genius.”

Henrik smiled up at Carla, showing his missing tooth. He pointed at the mouse again. “Mickey!”

“Yes,” He forced a smile, the muscles of his face moving awkwardly, and leaned down to kiss the boy's forehead. “It's Mickey.”

“Want to try it again?”

“Yes.”

She was slow to cover his hand, and this time Damon didn't pull away, forcing himself to focus on the mechanics of the computer instead of the crawling feeling in his hand.

“No, the site you want to look for is Google. G-O-O-G-L-E. But every site begins with WWW. and ends with a dot com, so it goes like this; www.google.com.” She waited patiently while he typed the letters on the keyboard. “Now you press enter on the keyboard.”

Damon eyed the keyboard, taking a while to find the key. When he pressed it, another page appeared, white this time.

“You can search for anything you want in here, anything.”

Damon looked at the screen curiously, before hope tried to bloom in his heart. Damon squashed it, but couldn't avoid asking. “Can I search for people?”

“Yes, but unless they’re famous it’s hard to get any real results.”

He bit down his bottom lip, searching for the ‘S’.

Stefan Antonio Salvatore.

He knew it was most likely impossible to find Stefan there, even if he were alive, but a bitter taste still found its way to his mouth when Carla showed him how to see the pictures of the people found and his brother’s face wasn't there.

Henrik was now blinking drowsily, his head resting on Damon's collarbone. It was way past Henrik's bed time, but Damon thought it safer for them to leave at night than during the day.

“Is everything alright?”

Damon faced the girl again, nodding. “Yes.”

She smiled kindly. “Was that all?”

“Yes.” He agreed, getting up. She'd been incredibly helpful, way more

than the old librarian he first asked to help him the day before. “You will forget about this meeting, forget about me and about Henrik.” He started the compulsion. “You came to study at the library, and fell asleep. When you woke up, you found yourself locked in, but you're not scared; you know that in a few hours someone will come to open the library again.”

“I am not scared, I know someone will come soon.”

“Good luck with your exams, Carla.” He said, leaving the library and locking it up with the keys he'd gotten from the librarian, leaving it in the hallway for someone else to find.

This time, when the scenario changed, he was already expecting it.

The entirety of Damon’s senses were attuned to the guard approaching his cell.

He was reaching the final step to the basement stairs.

Damon held Henrik by his scrawny shoulders. “Ready?”

Henrik hummed, his eyes huge in a way Damon hadn't seen in a long time. The bright boy he’d been when they first met had changed into a quiet, reserved toddler.

Damon left Henrik near the bars, the boy playing with a balloon made with a doctor’s gloves Damon had managed to steal from the lab two days ago when he’d been released from his binders.

The guard slowled on his steps when he got a glimpse of Damon, sitting by the far right corner of the cell now, and pretending to be preoccupied with the few threads that were jutting out of his t-shirt’s seams.

Every step the man took closer to them made Damon’s heart want to skip a beat, but he didn’t fault his movements, remaining calm.

It could be today, it could be tomorrow. They’d been trying for three weeks already, Henrik and he, ever since the day the boy had pulled Damon towards him with his magic in a tantrum, but Henrik wasn’t succeeding on repeating that feat.

Damon reigned in his disappointment when the guard passed by their cell. Not today, then.

But Henrik hadn't given up yet. The boy let out a small grunt, and in the next second the guard had been tugged from his place two cells ahead and hit the bars of Damon's cell.

Damon pounced at him immediately, covering the man's mouth and ravishing his neck, drinking him dry.

After fifty years, the fresh blood tasted strange, richer and Damon felt so full his mind grew fuzzy. He heaved, elated, and though the man was now empty, he still did not want to take his teeth away from the guard's neck.

"Daddy?"

He snapped out of it, his senses returning to him even stronger than before, and the urgency of the situation they were in hit him at full force.

They had to leave. It was his first chance in over fifty years.

He pulled the guard closer, tapping his pockets for his keys while he reached out with his hearing, trying to understand what was happening on the first floor.

There was a noise of a rolling chair moving on top of his head, and heavy feet moving. Then more chairs, screeching back.

They were coming.

Opening the gates was a quick task, even though the bars were coated in vervain Damon didn't even feel the sting anymore. He wasted no time in picking Henrik up, the boy staring at his no doubt bloody face curiously. "Close your eyes, keep them close." He ordered, walking out of the cell and wrapping Henrik's arms around his neck. "Hold firm." He tapped on the boy's little hands. Henrik's grip tightened, his face buried between them. "Don't let go, no matter what happens, you hear me?"

The toddler nodded against his neck, and though Damon couldn't see his face, he knew Henrik would obey.

Two men appeared at the end of the stairs, and Damon ran towards them, snapping both of their necks swiftly. Part of him wanted to drink them dry as well, but he didn't trust himself near blood now. It was too much of a distraction.

“Let’s play a game.” Damon continued evenly, following up the stairs. There were four heartbeats waiting for them on the floor above. “I’ll count to twenty. If you keep your eyes closed till then, I’ll give you something delicious to eat.”

“Delicious.” Henrik repeated, his legs curling even tighter around Damon’s waist.

“Keep your eyes close.”

Damon punched the wall ahead of him, taking out two bricks before making his way upstairs.

The first guard’s head was ripped off by the first brick. The second one went into the following man’s mouth before Damon shoved his thumbs past the hole in his eyes, digging them out with ease.

“One… two…”

The third and fourth guard had their hearts ripped, and Damon pulled out the gun from the latter to point at the other three that appeared at the entrance to the experiment room. Damon chuckled darkly as he pulled the trigger, each of them dying with wooden bullets in their foreheads.

How fitting.

He stopped, hearing only one other heartbeat. One he knew all too well.

Dr. Whitmore.

The heartbeat was so fast it couldn't be more obvious that the man was terrified.

Damon licked his lips, tasting the blood still in his mouth, while a mean smile grew on his face.

Oh.

That one Damon wanted to take his time with.

“Nine…”

Damon looked back to the child hanging on to him and heard a gun being locked. His grin grew – at least the doctor would give him a resemblance of a fight.

He was about to put Henrik down when he heard a shot, and the heartbeat ceased.

“No!” He breathed out, rushing towards the lab.

The sight almost made him crumple, his hand grasping onto the doorframe as he staggered back. His emotions escaped the tight hold he kept on them, threatening to control him.

The coward had killed himself, taking away Damon's only chance of revenge.

Tears of anger pricked his eyes, but Damon pushed them back.

Fuck.

He hovered over the man's body, slumped against one of the lab's cabinets, his body now trembling with rage he now had no one to take out on.

“Ten? Is it ten, daddy?” Henrik asked, lips moving against Damon's neck, and his high pitched voice the only reason Damon didn't lose it completely.

“It’s ten.” He forced out, a bitter taste to his mouth and put a mental dam on his emotions again, ignoring them with ease.

They needed to leave. The doctor could have called someone.

But before that he needed to make sure that any information on him and Henrik was gone. He started pulling at each drawer and shoving it into the floor.

He found the kerosene used in the burning experiments on the lower cabinets, and took them out to put them above the litter, continuing with his search.

Medical equipment, two lighters, notebooks, some weird stuff that looked a lot like magical symbols.

“Can I look now, daddy?”

“Hold on for just a bit longer, Hal.”

He went through the notebooks, finding only notes about the experiments they made on him, but beneath them, sitting innocently in the drawer, were two files. One on Damon and the other on Henrik.

There. That was what he was looking for.

Damon took out the entire drawer, putting it beneath his arm before picking up the kerosene and letting it fall right into Dr. Whitmore's face, watching as his opened mouth got filled with it in indifference.

He left the lab room, leaving a trace of kerosene as he went and watered the stairs as well before following the 'EXIT' sign above the hallway's door.

Henrik was silent, scrunching up his eyes close even as Damon brought him from his back to hold him in his arms.

Turning on the lighter with one hand, he threw it at the end of the kerosene trail, opening the door at the same time.

The sun, warm and bright, hit them both, and it had been so long since the last time Damon had seen it he forgot one wasn't supposed to stare straight at it.

He blinked away the black spots on his vision, hair fluttering against his forehead as a gust of wind passed through them, a stark contrast to the suffocating heat behind him.

"You can look now, Hal." He whispered quietly, walking down the steps and taking in the campus in front of him, so much like the many colleges Damon had visited before.

There was no one around, and Henrik blinked, his little mouth falling open while he looked around, taking in every little thing people took for granted, but Damon was sure he'd never seen before.

The sun, however, didn't stay for long, and the vision of the campus became blurry.

He blinked, and Henrik was coughing violently in his arms, his entire face red from the fever.

"If the boy dies, you will lose your job." He told the guard, the man watching, unbothered, from the other side of the bars.

"Don't pretend you care for the little monster, vampire."

Damon snarled, vampire running towards the man, and getting to the bars so fast the guard tripped onto his own feet on his rush to put more distance between them.

He stared him down. “One day I will get out of here and I will look for you and kill your entire family while I make you watch, crying your boring eyes.”

The man’s eyes trembled as he heaved.

The scare did work on getting him to run upstairs, so Damon considered it a success, even if he later suffered for it.

Whoever was inside his mind was not interesting watching any longer, because it changed to another memory; this time Henrik was bleeding from his nose all over Damon's shirt, the boy all but unconscious while Damon watched every movement of the doctors in front of him, a man he had yet to meet and a dark skinned woman.

“He's young, he will learn, grow stronger.”

“We're pushing too far,” The man disagreed. “It's because he's young you must go easier on him. He's one of yours, after all, and his only sin is to share their blood.”

“Henrik is the key to the balance. We don't have time to wait for him to grow, he just needs to push himself a bit further.”

And that was when she made a mistake, so entranced by the boy in his arms she approached the bars.

Damon was built for making good use of mistakes, and his reward was her dead body crumpled in front of him.

Once again, the memory changed.

The next time, Damon was trying his best not to lose it after his brother's name was mentioned by Doctor Whitmore during one of their sessions.

He remembered that day as if it'd been yesterday, the terror had left a taste of ash to his mouth, and the feeling was so real he finally understood what was happening to him; someone was going past his memories.

Damon struggled – now that he was aware of what was going on the outside presence in the back of his mouth became obvious, an uncomfortable pressure that never left and never subsided.

But just because he knew about the invasion, it didn't mean he could

stop it from happening.

The man dug the scalpel into his eye, cutting it in half. “This time you keep your pretty eyes open, won't you? Or would you rather I bring the kid here and try this with him? We can use your blood to cure him later on,”

“Though I suppose your brother Stefan would be a much better test subject.”

Damon's hand convulsed against the litter as he struggled to keep quiet. That was the only experiment he couldn't stand, the area of his eyes so sensitive it felt like someone was digging into his chest and caressing his heart.

He wanted Doctor William there, the man at the very least didn't threaten him with his family.

“If you don't keep quiet I will gag you.”

Damon hadn't even noticed he was whimpering. He clicked his mouth shut, clenching and unclenching his hand nervously.

Whitmore's voice was grating while he continued to dig into Damon's cornea.

Damon closed his eyes tight, the ghosts of the cut lingering, and when he opened then next he was meeting Henrik for the first time again, the boy being shoved into his cell, only to then all but demand for him to step up and take the position of his father, his huge eyes the same as Stefan – he'd looked so much like Stefan as a child, their hairs almost the same color before Henrik's darkened, even the smile was the same, a pure slice of happiness that had no place in a lab like that one.

The presence in his mind disappeared so abruptly Damon was brought awake with a silent scream.

He heaved, eyes searching wildly around the room for whoever was responsible for digging into his mind, and for a second he dreaded looking down and finding Elijah to be the perpetrator, but Elijah was still asleep, the last rays of the sunset reaching just a few inches away from his face.

Then, all of his senses pointed to a dark corner in the room, next to the door, and his eyes fell onto Kol, the nonchalant vampire already

staring back at him.

Damon felt his face transform, his temper finally showing as his anger reached a boiling point, and he lunged towards Kol, punching him in the face with all his strength. Kol staggered back, falling into the ground with a pained grunt, and Damon went along with him, his thighs at each side of Kol's chest as he punched him again, and again, and again, and the fact the damned asshole did not react was making him even more enraged.

"That's what you wanted, wasn't it?" He roared at Kol's bloody face, landing another punch. Around him, steps began to make themselves known, heartbeats starting to approach. Despite the danger, Damon didn't stop – couldn't stop. "Was that what you wanted? You wanted to know." He breathed out erratically, shoving his hand into Kol's chest. "Why don't I give you the full experience?" He curled his fingers around the original's chest and caressed it, his whole body trembling with the need to pull the heart out.

And still Kol didn't react.

Face scrunched up in fury, Damon curled his fingers around his heart, and ripped his hand out of Kol's chest.

But the weight of Kol's heart did nothing to assuage the growing madness inside him.

Chapter End Notes

The mood for this chapter:

Once again, Damon is not having a good time :/ I don't know why this keeps happening 👀
Also, how does this thing with the originals's heart work? they just regrow? and what would happen if someone ripped their head's off? lol anyways, Kol's obviously not dead.
****
So, yeah, now one of them knows. There's also a huge hint on what Henrik was doing with Augustine.
By the way, the smut was supposed to be in Elijah's POV, but I regretted it the moment I started lmao he seems too elegant for me to use words like cock lmaoooooooo
also, idk if you guys agree with me but Elijah gives me dominant freak vibes while damon gives off switch lol
Writing the smut was hell, btw, I'm terrible at it I'm so sorry lmaooo let me dig myself a hole now so I can hide my burning face
□□□□ hope you enjoyed it, let me know what you thought bye

Chapter 18: Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

> THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE COMMENTS GUYS, I AM GOING TO ANSWER THEM ALL, IN TIME <3 also, shout out to MelodiousPenguin cause I was about to leave this draft here and edit it on the weekend but when I logged into here there was like, 20 comments from them and they were all perfect and I decided to do it right on my way to college ahhaha
> Also, so, SO sorry for the delay, this just wasn't coming out the way I wanted and then I had midterms, then I had finals and when my summer vacation came up I spent a week trying to write this chapter, but it just wasn't working so I got upset and stopped. Anyway, am I satisfied with this? No, but it has to be done, I can't take it anymore.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

ELIJAH

After so many centuries alive, Elijah was overly aware of how fast situations could change – especially when it involved his siblings, reckless beings that they were, but it still caught him by surprise when he was ripped out of his relaxing rest by a commotion just outside his room.

Still, accustomed as he was to the ruckus that usually followed his family, he was unhurried to get up, choosing instead to pat around the bed in search of his lover, only to be met with cold sheets.

He opened one eye, taking in the room, and concern immediately arose inside him when there were no signs of Damon.

Concern that only grew once he heard Damon's recognizable growl. He was in the hallway in a rush.

His stomach dropped, and he froze mid-run in horror, supporting himself on his bedroom's door frame.

Damon was sitting on Kol's chest, his back covering Elijah's sight of his brother, and there was no mistaking the wet, grotesque sound of a heart being pulled out.

For a few seconds he was certain Damon would fall to the side, precious life gone, but the vampire remained sitting, his shoulders shaking from either adrenaline or fear.

Slowly, Damon turned on his heels, head hung low. He'd never looked more inhuman than he did now as he crouched down beside Kol's body, growing completely still. Now that he'd moved, Elijah could finally get a glimpse of his brother's mangled, bloody face, and the hole on his chest.

From the corner of his eyes, he caught sight of Niklaus strolling towards them, eyes alight with morbid curiosity. Rebekah stood in the middle of the stairs, gripping into the handrail with her mouth hanging open.

Elijah quickly returned his attention to Damon.

Just what had Kol done…

"Damon," He called, his confusion multiplying tenfold as the younger man started to dig into the floor and pull out a floorboard.

Damon did not look at him, not at first, his eyes glued to the end of the hallway. His voice didn't sound like his own when he spoke. "You."

"Me, us." Niklaus shrugged carelessly, on his face an arrogant smile that only grew in size when their eyes met.

Elijah stilled, anger brewing in his chest as he finally understood what happened – what was about to happen.

For the first time in the conversation Damon glanced at him, and the white in his eyes was nowhere to be seen.

That second of misdirected attention was all it took. Niklaus charged.

Rebekah gasped, and Elijah immediately reacted, pushing his brother back with enough strength to send him flying all the way back until he crashed against the stairs' handrail. He twisted around, stepping ahead and placing a hand on Damon's chest to keep him from advancing as well, but Damon pushed *him* towards the wall with such a strength and speed Elijah would have doubted his real age had him not experienced the same power being wielded against him once before.

Elijah gripped his arm, more to hold him in place and keep him from attacking Niklaus and dying in the process than to stop Damon from pressing him further into the wall.

He was grasping for straws as his mind came up with all sorts of misdeeds his siblings may have done to get this reaction out of Damon, but it was hard to guess when the younger vampire showed no signs of having been attacked whatsoever.

Damon shoved his face near Elijah's. "Did you know?" He asked, voice carrying so much anger it was hard to understand. "Did you get close to me, weaken me – *did you use me* so Kol could get inside my head?"

"Ding, ding, ding." Niklaus clapped. Damon tilted his head, unblinking, before his dark eyes shifted to Niklaus. Each clap of his brother's hands was a hit to a drum designed to arouse Elijah's anger. "Congratulations, love, you've finally figured out our evil conspiracy."

"Niklaus, don't." He managed to work past the rigidness of his tongue to warn.

"Surely it's not the first time you are betrayed by someone you trust, oh, wait." His brother was the epitome of condescension, but Elijah could see the betrayal flashing past his gaze when their eyes met. It lasted only a second, before Niklaus looked away once again, determined to get his revenge for the dead witch and attempt to ruin Elijah and their last chance at having an united family for the final time in the process. "It really isn't, so it mustn't come as that much of a shock-"

Elijah's grip on Damon tightened. "Damon, I didn't-"

"Anyways, provided you're used to it, if you could snap out of the whole drama and share with the team what Kol found out it would be nice; he'll tell me soon anyways."

He should've known it would come to this, and yet he still brought Damon into his home, believing his siblings would respect the one thing he asked from them, the one good thing they got after so long.

"He's lying." Damon bared his teeth at him, trying to pull away harshly. Elijah grabbed the back of his neck, using the hand on his arm to give him a little shake as the desperation made him act more forceful than he would've liked. "He's doing this to get revenge on me. I swear I didn't know," He said, baring all his sincerity for the man in

front of him. “I would have never allowed it to happen had I known.”

Damon shook his head, scrunched up his nose. He bared his teeth again, the vampire ones retreating and growing halfway, his eyes still black, the veins still not receding. He stopped struggling, but Elijah had no idea what was going through his mind.

Through it all, he didn’t fail to notice the makeshift dagger in the younger’s hand remained pointed downwards.

Damon nodded, once, the dark veins reaching for his cheeks receding a little.

“Please, Elijah, he already knows the truth.” Niklaus dragged out sadistically. Never let it be said he didn’t enjoy himself up to the last second.

Sufficiently certain Damon had chosen to trust him, Elijah let him go, guiding his body until he was behind him while he stormed towards his brother.

“How could you.”

Niklaus’ smirk grew, strolling closer. That was fine, Elijah would take it out of his face in no time.

A rush of air passed by his side, and only the sudden quietness allowed him to hear it. Elijah tilted his head slightly, halting when a piece of wood flew past him.

Niklaus grabbed it, turning it around and throwing it back right away. Elijah stepped to the side, intercepting it halfway into Damon’s direction, but another one came right behind the first. He wouldn’t have believed how fast Damon moved if he hadn’t seen it in first person, but before Niklaus could change the piece of the board’s direction, the younger was already grabbing his other arm and twisting it, swinging him around and throwing him all the way back onto the hallway, not even waiting for Niklaus’ back to crash against the handrail before charging at him again.

Rebekah's shout for his name was muffled as it reached him, his attention all in the fight.

His brother grunted, headbutting Damon, but it was of no use; Damon stabbed him in the chest, breaking the made up stake with a piece still inside.

Elijah watched, debating with himself whether to cut in or let Damon do as he pleased when the younger stepped back and kicked Niklaus right onto the wound.

Niklaus groaned, falling over the handrail and into the first floor.

Damon jumped after Niklaus in a graceful, skillful movement, but Elijah didn't hear him land.

"Such audacity," Niklaus said, too calmly for it to be good.

"Niklaus, do not hurt him!" Elijah shouted, running towards them. He propelled his body upwards with one of his arms, leaping over the handrail as well.

He stopped dead in his movements, heart trapped in his throat.

Niklaus cocked an eyebrow at him, holding Damon by the neck, and the younger's feet hung above the floor as he struggled to breath. The smell of blood reached his nose before he even saw his brother's other hand shoved into Damon's chest.

"Careful now, Elijah, I may pull the wrong thing out."

Damon grunted, gripping into the hand that held him by the throat with both of his own, all but trying to set Niklaus on fire with just the fury of his glare.

Elijah held both his hands in front of him, an attempt at placating that only served to make his brother laugh. "Brother-"

"Oh, it's brother now."

"Nik, stop it!"

"Stay out of this, Rebekah!" Niklaus looked back just to shout. "This one here," He twisted his hand around, and the noise of Damon's insides moving along with it caused Elijah to shudder, his stomach revolting. "Lied to my face. Or rather, made a pathetic attempt to. Had to endure a couple of hours of heartfelt, boring conversation for you to get drunk enough."

"What are you saying?" Rebekah asked.

"Let him go, Niklaus, I was the one who got in your way."

"Oh, but this isn't a competition, Elijah. Damon has fooled me as

well."

Elijah used Niklaus' willingness to talk to approach, his steps silent, his stance casual. He only needed to be close enough to break his brother's neck before Niklaus' pulled Damon's heart out.

"Now, it escapes me. What did I tell you I'd do if you lied to me?" Niklaus gave Damon a little shake, blood gushing out of the younger's wound as the hand inside his chest moved along. Elijah gasped silently, watching it in horror.

Damon had yet to make a sound.

"Rot. In hell." Damon croaked out.

He winced internally, faltering. His brother scoffed, previous smirk now nowhere in sight, and bells started to ring around Elijah's head as Niklaus' eyes coldened.

He ran towards them, but Niklaus was faster, pulling his hand out of Damon's chest.

"No!" A bloodcurdling scream left him, the strength of his legs gone. He fell to his knees, too afraid to look, yet incapable of taking his eyes away.

Niklaus broke Damon's neck, letting his body fall carelessly into the floor, the motion seeming illogical to Elijah until his brother turned around slowly, no heart to be seen in his hands.

Elijah knew he was giving Niklaus exactly what he wanted when he ran to Damon, but he didn't care, gathering the younger in his arms and ripping the hole in the sweatshirt he was wearing open so he could take a look at his chest.

The wound in the form of Niklaus' fist was gaping open, but the heart was still there, beating rapidly. Elijah closed his eyes, sinking into the ground until his forehead was touching Damon's cheek as he exhaled in relief, his whole body shaking from the scare.

His brother's feet appeared in his field of vision, and Elijah let his own eyes darken as he looked up. "Careful, Elijah, you're showing your hand. You *really* seem to care about this one, it's been a while since the last time I've seen you like this-"

He crashed against Niklaus with all his strength, pushing him into the

wall by the throat.

“How dare you?” He snarled.

“How dare I?” Niklaus grabbed into his arms with one of his hands, the other one attempting to push his face away. “How dare you, Elijah! You killed my witch, the key to building an army that will ensure we keep Henrik by our side-”

Elijah swung his body into the floor, the crack of Niklaus’ back resounding loud in the silent house. “No, Niklaus, you’ve just destroyed the key to keep Henrik by our side.” He grabbed onto the coat rack next to the door, hitting Niklaus’ in the jaw before he could get up. “You’ve gone too far this time.”

The next time he swung the rack, Niklaus grabbed it. Elijah tried to let go, but it was too late and he could only ready himself for the impact as his body broke past the large walls of the meeting hall.

Before he could gather his senses, his brother was on top of him, dagger dipped with oak tree ashes shining in his hand, diving into his chest. Elijah shouted, struggling to fight against Niklaus’ strength, but it was useless: the dagger pierced his flesh, blood starting to form, and he felt his veins begin to slowly dry, popping out his flesh.

Then Niklaus was gone, his weight thrown off and Elijah opened his eyes, breathing raggedly, to see Rebekah in front of him, her own chest moving in rapid movements.

“Rebekah!” Niklaus roared, sitting down from his lying position, dagger still in hand. Rebekah took a couple of steps back, before standing her ground. “Move away, now, or you will be next.”

Elijah heaved, slamming both hands against the ground so he could pick himself up, the pain caused by his wound making his arms feel dead.

“No, Nik. Not this time. Elijah’s right – this madness of yours will destroy our family!”

He had rarely, if ever, seen her defy Niklaus, and yet there she was.

When Niklaus grabbed her neck, Elijah seized him from behind, but he was still weak and was easily pushed aside, colliding against the last remaining vase from the last fight, crashing it in several pieces. He struggled to lift his head, panting, and couldn’t stop his eyes from

falling into Damon's fallen form even as Niklaus rounded him.

He couldn't let himself be daggered, not now.

Damon wasn't moving, bleeding all over the floor of the one place he should've never been hurt at.

Niklaus followed his gaze, rolling his eyes.

Elijah peered at Rebekah – her moment of bravery had left her as she pressed herself against the far-away corner, trying to make herself invisible.

"Rebekah," He called, putting a hand on his knee as he stood up. "Go. Take Damon with you."

His sister flinched at being addressed, but Elijah wouldn't be able to concentrate completely so long they both remained there. If he were to beat Niklaus, all the odds would have to be in his favor.

Rebekah glanced at him, gaze fleeting towards Damon then Niklaus' back. Elijah nodded, once, and it was enough. The front door slammed as she ran past it, leaving him alone with their brother.

"Damon, Damon, Damon." Niklaus mocked. "Do you not tire of thinking only of him?"

Elijah glowered, shaking his head. "No, you don't get to pin this on him, Niklaus!" His voice strained at the last words as he did his best not to start shouting while pointing at his brother. "Don't you dare pretend this is about you feeling abandoned!"

"You killed my witch!" Niklaus roared again, as if the first time he whined about it wasn't enough. "And after you ruined my only chance you came back here to play house with that treatch–"

"Are you even hearing yourself? Your chance of what?"

"Of having people loyal to me."

Elijah stopped, speechless at the absolute disgust that rose inside him. After everything they've been through, all this time he spent continuously forgiving him for his deceptions, his treachery, Niklaus would rather have forged devotion masquerading as loyalty.

"You will be lucky if Henrik ever forgives you for this." For a second, a passing moment of hope he thought Niklaus would stop, come back

to his senses for once in his life, but the blue of his eyes was taken by yellow and the beast his brother became strode towards him slowly, the dagger in his hands ready for a strike. “You may stick me in a coffin if you want,” Elijah told him. “Yet the truth remains that I am right and you know it.”

That only served to make Niklaus more furious. This time Elijah was prepared for the attack.

The angrier Niklaus got, the sloppier it made him. Sloppy enough for him not to pay attention to the many pieces of ceramic by Elijah’s feet. He grabbed it, piercing it into the back of Niklaus’ neck the second he was within reach, slapping the dagger away with his free hand, and while his brother gathered his bearings, hand tapping helplessly at the piece of ceramic impaled into his neck, Elijah held both sides of his head, cracking it in a swift motion.

Heaving, he took the first step towards the door.

The wound in his chest was almost closed by the time he walked past the mansion’s threshold.

He made the calculated decision to take the long way to the Salvatore’s Boarding House, wanting to give Damon some time to think before attempting to have a conversation with him.

Rebekah had called him just as he was about to dial her number. Damon had woken up just as they were reaching his place, and Rebekah left him there with Henrik, dragging Finn along with her as she reached the same conclusion as Elijah.

Best to give Damon some time alone.

It was night when he arrived at the Salvatore's, the Boarding House quiet, with only two recognizable heartbeats coming from inside. Not so long ago he’d never have imagined he’d be able to pinpoint them so naturally.

Damon and Henrik.

Conversation, slightly distorted by the speaker of the television, reached his ears, along with Henrik’s short giggle.

Elijah stared at his hand as he raised it to knock. Should he even be there? Did he even have the right to knock after what he, unintentional as it was, caused? Shouldn't he allow Damon some more time away, to grieve having his mind so brutally violated and let Damon come to him instead? Would Damon even want to look at him after what his siblings had done?

The door knob turned, and Damon stepped out. "You're here," He said, his eyes scanning Elijah's body. "I was starting to think Rebekah had lied to me and Klaus had stocked you up in a removal truck."

Stocked him up. Any other time he would have chuckled in amusement.

Damon smirked a little, and had Elijah not been with him an hour ago he wouldn't have ever guessed it had ever happened. Having changed his clothes into his usual ones, Damon looked no different than he had in the beginning of the afternoon, no traces of anger or distress to be found.

At least none for him to see.

It took everything in him not to pull Damon into a hug.

Start from the beginning .

"I… came to apologize, and make sure you were alright."

Damon's answering smile was bittersweet, and he closed the door behind him. "You weren't the one who got into my head, Elijah." He said dismissively, passing by Elijah and sitting in the front steps.

Elijah stared – something about the way Damon moved and talked was different from usual, though that was to be expected after the ambush, and he would have thought it was a dismissal had not Damon tapped the spot beside him.

Elijah followed him slowly, sitting down as well – his knees almost up to his chest as his feet rested in the ground. They were close enough if he were to tilt his leg to the side their thighs would touch, but he dared not. It was Damon who drew closer, leaning against his side and burying his face into his chest. Elijah wrapped his arm around him right away, unable to keep his hands to himself any longer.

They stood like that for a couple of minutes, listening to the wind brushing past the faraway trees' leaves and to Henrik's occasional

chuckles and mumbles, Elijah concentrating on following and circling the small bumps of Damon's spine.

There were so many things he wanted to say, but none would ever be enough to convey how sorry he was for what had happened under his nose.

"In the forties I was good friends with the Salvatore who first started building this house" Damon muttered.

Elijah rubbed at Damon's small back. "It's a beautiful house."

"I helped a little with the design," Damon continued. "But I didn't stay to see the final result, so when I was invited for a party here in 1953 I thought, 'what the hell, why not'-"

1. Elijah stilled, the date and its meanings rounding his brain.

Despite how much he wanted to know, he didn't want it to be like this.

"You do not have to tell me–" He interrupted.

"You're going to find out anyway," Damon shrugged, his whole upper body resting against Elijah now, the back of his neck gleaming due to the sweat caused by the warm night. "I'd rather it be from me, so you can draw your own conclusions."

Elijah leaned back to catch a glimpse of Damon's face, supporting himself with the hand that wasn't caressing Damon's back, but the younger followed, successfully keeping his face hidden.

"His son greeted me. Joseph. I was too arrogant, too used to being the strongest being in the room." Damon huffed, a bitter little noise and although Elijah didn't know exactly what would come next, every possible outcome his mind came up with was appalling. "I wasn't paying attention, and then he mentioned Stefan, whom I hadn't seen in years and I got even more distracted." His voice became monotonous halfway into the sentence. "He injected me with vervain and when I woke up next I was at the cell I would spend my following fifty years. That's where I met Henrik."

Elijah took a shuddering breath.

His entire world began to collapse.

DAMON

He lived one hundred and forty seven years as a vampire without running into a werewolf and within two months of meeting that dick of an original Hybrid Damon had already been bitten twice because of him.

He didn't tell Rebekah, nor Henrik. Much less Stefan, who thankfully was too far away to try something dumb or self sacrificial like he did the last time. It was of no consequence – there was nothing they could do about it.

There wasn't anything Elijah could do either.

Klaus was stronger than him, and with Kol by his side and the full moon steadily rising into its peak in the sky Elijah didn't stand a chance, not alone, and Damon wouldn't be able to help, he could feel his body starting to deteriorate already.

At least he wouldn't face death wondering if Henrik would follow, not this time.

When Kol dug into his head, Damon didn't just relive everything, he also remembered the parts he forgot.

There was a fourth doctor in the room the last time they sliced his eyeballs into several different pieces. Up till now Damon had been sure the man had been Grayson Gilbert, but the man in the room with him had short hair and his following memory of Grayson… did not.

There was someone left alive aside from Doctor William. Someone who knew of Henrik's existence, someone who could come after him sooner or later.

So, in spite of every nerve on his body screaming otherwise, he told the only person he trusted with Henrik's life everything, selfishly taking comfort in the fact Elijah was there with him.

It didn't matter how much he didn't want Elijah to know, how much

he wished he could keep Augustine as his miserable secret forever. How it wasn't fair that Elijah had to find out like this.

It hadn't only been the pain that kept him silent about Augustine, but the fear.

The terrifying, petrifying shame of being seen bare, all his flaws there to be seen.

Weak. Stupid.

His arrogance had been his stupidity, he thought he'd learned his lesson when it brought him five years of hell, always keeping his guard up.

His all consuming need for connections bought him another fifty. *That* weakness he had yet to overcome, and in a way was what brought him to this. Even so, as every breath he took filled his nostrils with the scent of Elijah's laundry soap, he couldn't regret it.

It was worth it, even if it only lasted a short while.

He forged on. It was surprisingly easy, the words becoming easier to come out despite the way his body was failing him. Once he started, the nauseous feeling surrounding him began to dissipate, overtaken by a numbness that let him think clearly and choose his words well, sometimes trying to explain himself, sometimes jumping over details, out of feebleness and out of love.

Elijah didn't need to hear everything, Damon didn't want him to.

He barely mentioned Enzo, and he brushed over the hurt, but he was meticulous when speaking of the witches and Grayson Gilbert's involvements. It could be important, for all he knew. Elijah had to be prepared, Damon would never forgive himself if one day he got caught because he didn't know everything.

Damon kept his eyes closed as he continued – afraid not only that if he opened them now he would lose himself in his own head, but also of seeing Elijah's face, the shaking of his hands enough to give Damon an idea of his mental state and he surely would lose it if he looked up and the original was crying.

"Everyone that was there the morning we escaped died," He slowly licked his lips, the sweat salty in his tongue. Soon he wouldn't be able to taste anything. "and I took all the files regarding Henrik and I with

me – they're under a floorboard underneath my bed."

He could feel it, the lingering cold that always surrounded the cell reaching for his very bones. Concentrating, keeping himself conscious, was becoming harder by the second. Damon heaved, head slowly turning fuzzy. "Elena's father was one of the other doctors, the other was the man I went to kill a few days ago, but now I think there may have been a fourth–"

"Damon," Elijah's voice quavered, his hand leaving Damon's neck in favor of cupping his face, and though Damon tried to resist he knew it was futile, he heard the hitch in Elijah's heartbeat. The cat was out of the bag.

He watched through hazy eyes as Elijah's own tracked his sweaty face and no doubt white lips before the original began pulling on his jacket, then lifting the hem of his shirt.

Damon sighed, taking pity on him. Elijah's hands were shaking more than his own. "It's on my left shoulder."

Elijah pulled on the collar of his shirt, growing stiffer than he already was. Damon wasn't able to see the bite well, but the itch in his neck had to mean the skin there was turning purple.

Chapter End Notes

Bad cliffhanger – sorry. It was best this way, it will fit better with the next chapter.
The reason why I couldn't write this at all is because Damon didn't want to tell Elijah about Augustine lol but he HAD to, it wasn't fair for Klaus and Kol to know but not Elijah! I had this planned from day one and Damon needed to follow the plot!! So I had to force it out of him and the only way I could find was out protectiveness.
Hope you guys enjoyed it, don't beat Klaus too much, Damon did lie to him and Elijah did kill his witch (his only lead to figuring out what is wrong with the hybrids) and he has a million and a half trust issues so in his mind everything is very shady.
Elijah's pov was hell to write, tbh. He was just so pissed, and the fight scenes with three men were horrible to describe.
Also I really wish we got to see Damon vs Klaus in the show, see how it would be.
Damon's powers are kind of a mess. Sometimes he's stronger than an original and sometimes he's bested by a newbie vampire, but

one thing I noticed is that when he's pissed he grows stronger so to me that translates in him landing a couple of punches on Klaus! yay!
Last, but not least, have a good week, everyone!!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!